2
LEVEL

Aqeedah

Islamic Creed

العبيكان للتعليم
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Aqeedah

Islamic Creed

Level 2

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Preface

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and blessings and peace be upon the noblest of the Prophets and Messengers, our Prophet Muhammad, and upon all his family and Companions. To proceed:

Islamic knowledge is one of the most important necessities that the Muslim needs in his life; the entire ummah, in its efforts to rebuild Islamic civilization, is in need of it. Hence the religious texts point out the importance of Islamic knowledge and its bearers. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge - [that He is] maintaining [creation] in justice. There is no deity except Him, the Exalted in Might, the Wise}* [Aal Imran 3:18]. Ash-Shawkani رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ said: What is meant by those of knowledge here is the scholars of the Quran and Sunnah. And Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{and say, "My Lord, increase me in knowledge"}* [Ta-Ha 20:114].

In the hadith it says: **«Whoever follows a path seeking knowledge thereby, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise.»** Narrated by Muslim.

This series of textbooks comes to serve the community, with the aim of conveying Islamic knowledge by various methods and making it readily available to those who seek it. We hope that it will be another source of knowledge for academic programs and that it will be a support and help to those who want to acquire more Islamic knowledge and education, in an effort to achieve the main goal, which is to spread and instill sound Islamic knowledge on a sound academic foundation and in accordance with correct beliefs, based on the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, in a modern and easily-understood style. We ask Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ to grant us all beneficial knowledge, enable us to do righteous deeds, guide us and help us to be sincere in our efforts.

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The Zad
Academy Series

Aqeedah

Islamic Creed

Level 2

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1

Tawhid al-uluhiyah

(oneness of divinity, or worshipping Allah Alone)

In this unit we will study

Tawhid al-uluhiyah
(oneness of divinity, or worshipping Allah Alone)

- The meaning of Tawhid al-uluhiyah (oneness of divinity, or worshipping Allah Alone)
- The evidences for Tawhid al-uluhiyah (oneness of divinity, or worshipping Allah Alone)
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The meaning of Tawhid al-uluhiyah (oneness of divinity, or worshipping Allah Alone)

In linguistic terms, uluhiyah comes from the root aliha, meaning worship. From that stems the [variant] recitation of Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما of the verse *{and abandon you and your gods [wa yadharaka wa ilaahataka]}* [al-A'raf 7:127]. Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما recited the word aalihataka (translated here as "your gods") as ilaahataka, meaning "your worship".

From the same root comes the divine name Allah, and its root ilaah, which refers to one who is worshipped, as well as the word uluhiyah, which refers to worship.

In Islamic terminology, uluhiyah means directing to Allah Alone all the acts of worship that His slaves perform.

In other words: it means directing and devoting worship only to Allah جل وعلا,

such as supplication (dua), vows (nadhr), sacrifices, hope, love, fear, trust, reliance, seeking refuge, and seeking help both at times of desperate need and in daily life.

Thus Allah Alone is the One to Whom all types of worship should be directed, so the individual should not direct his worship to anyone other than Allah عز وجل, whether it be an angel, a prophet, a wali ("saint"), a shaykh, an idol, a statue or any creature created by Allah عز وجل.

Tawhid al-uluhiyah is also called **Tawhid al-amal** (oneness of action, or devoting one's actions solely to Allah), **Tawhid al-qasd** (oneness of aims and goals), and **Tawhid al-iradah wa't-talab** (oneness of will and purpose), because it is based on having a sincere aim in all that one does, which is to seek the pleasure of Allah عز وجل Alone, with no partner or associate.

Therefore, what is meant by Tawhid al-uluhiyah is:

To direct to Allah عز وجل Alone all types of worship, both inward acts of worship such as supplication, seeking (help), fear, love, hope, trust, vows, obedience and so on, and seeking Him and worshipping Him Alone when doing visible acts of worship, such as prayer, giving zakat, fasting, Hajj, upholding ties of kinship, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and so on.

Therefore, Tawhid al-uluhiyah is based on:

Evidence for Tawhid al-uluhiyah (worshipping Allah Alone)

There is a great deal of evidence for Tawhid al-uluhiyah (worshipping Allah Alone), including the following:

1. The verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that, "There is no god worthy of worship except Me, so worship Me"}* [al-Anbiya 21:25].

2. The verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], "Worship Allah and avoid Taghut"}* [an-Nahl 16:36].

3 The verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And We had certainly sent Noah to his people, and he said, "O my people, worship Allah; you have no god other than Him; then will you not fear Him?"}* [al-Mu'minun 23:23].

4 The verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says concerning Hud عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: *{And We sent among them a messenger from themselves, [saying], "Worship Allah; you have no god other than Him; then will you not fear Him?"}* [al-Mu'minun 23:32].

5 The verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Allah witnesses that there is no god worthy of worship except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge – [that He is] maintaining [creation] in justice. There is no god worthy of worship except Him, the Exalted in Might, the Wise}* [Aal Imran 3:18].

6 The verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And, [O mankind], do not make [as equal] with Allah another god, lest you be thrown into Hell, blamed and banished}* [al-Isra 17:39].

7 The verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And do not invoke with Allah another god. There is no god worthy of worship except Him. Everything will be destroyed except His Face. His is the judgement, and to Him you will be returned}* [al-Qasas 28:88].

8 The verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And they were not commanded except to worship one God; there is no god worthy of worship except Him. Exalted is He above whatever they associate with Him}* [at-Tawbah 9:31].

9 The verses in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Say, "Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds No partner has He. And this I have been commanded, and I am the first [among you] of the Muslims"}* [al-An'am 6:162-163].

The texts which speak of that are very numerous; in fact, most of the texts of the Quran affirm this important principle. This is the true purpose for which the Quran and all the Books were revealed, and for which Prophet Muhammad صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and all the prophets of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ were sent.

This is the type of Tawhid that the disbelievers failed to achieve, as they associated others with Allah and refused to believe in this type. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says, speaking of their objection to Tawhid al-uluhiyah and the command to worship Him Alone: *{[The disbelievers said:] "Has he made the gods [only] one God? Indeed, this is a curious thing"}* [Saad 38:5].

{Indeed they, when it was said to them, "There is no god worthy of worship but Allah" were arrogant, And were saying, "Are we to leave our gods for a mad poet?"} [as-Saffat 37:35-36].

The importance of Tawhid al-uluhiyah or worshipping Allah Alone:

The importance of worshipping Allah Alone is clear for the following reasons:

1 It is the purpose for which the jinn and humans were created, as Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me}* [adh-Dhariyat 51:56].

2

It is the purpose for which the messengers were sent, as Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that, "There is no god worthy of worship except Me, so worship Me"}* [al-Anbiya 21:25] *{And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], "Worship Allah and avoid Taghut"}* [an-Nahl 16:36].

3

It is the purpose for which the Books were revealed. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Alif, Lam, Ra. [This is] a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from [one who is] Wise and Acquainted [Through a messenger, saying], "Do not worship except Allah. Indeed, I am to you from Him a warner and a bringer of good tidings"}* [Hud 11:1-2].

4

No one can enter the religion of Islam except by affirming it, as the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«I have been commanded to fight the people until they say Laa ilaaha illa Allah. Whoever says Laa ilaaha illa Allah has protected himself and his wealth from me, except in cases dictated by Islamic law, and his reckoning will be with Allah.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Maymun ibn Siyah asked Anas ibn Malik رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ: O Abu Hamza, what makes a person's blood and wealth sacred? He said: Whoever bears witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah, faces our qiblah in prayer, prays as we pray, and eats the meat slaughtered by us is a Muslim, with the same rights and duties as any other Muslim. Narrated by al-Bukhaari.

5

It is the foremost message to be conveyed when calling people to Allah.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says, telling us how His Prophet Yusuf عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ began calling people: *{O [my] two companions of prison, are separate lords better or Allah, the One, the Prevailing. You worship not besides Him except [mere] names you have named them, you and your fathers, for which Allah has sent down no authority. Legislation is not but for Allah. He has commanded that you worship not except Him. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know}* [Yusuf 12:39-40].

The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to Muadh ibn Jabal رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ: **«You are going to some of the People of the Book, so let the first thing you call them to be the affirmation of Allah's oneness (Tawhid).»** Agreed upon.

6

It is the first duty that the accountable person must learn, as Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{So know, [O Muhammad], that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah and ask forgiveness for your sin}* [Muhammad 47:19].

7

It is what Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ enjoined upon His messengers عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein. Difficult for those who associate others with Allah is that to which you invite them. Allah chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides to Himself whoever turns back [to Him]}* [ash-Shura 42:13].

8

A person's salvation in the Hereafter, meaning his admittance to Paradise and being forbidden to the Fire, can only be attained by means of this, as the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Whoever bears witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah Alone, with no partner or associate, and that Muhammad is His slave and His Messenger, and that Isa is the slave of Allah and His messenger, and His word that He bestowed upon Maryam, and a soul created by Him, and that Paradise is true and Hell is true, Allah will admit him to Paradise on the basis of his deeds.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

And the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Allah has prohibited to the Fire whoever says Laa ilaaha illa Allah, seeking thereby the pleasure of Allah.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

9

The Prophet's intercession in the Hereafter can only be attained by means of worshipping Allah Alone (Tawhid al-uluhiyah), as the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«The most blessed of the people who will attain my intercession on the Day of Resurrection will be those who say Laa ilaaha illa Allah sincerely from the heart.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari.

Worshipping Allah Alone (Tawhid al-uluhiyah) is the first and last call of the messengers.

It is the reason why there were disputes between the prophets and their nations, and between the followers of the prophets, those who affirmed the oneness of Allah, and the polytheists and those who followed innovations and myths.

It was in this cause that swords were unsheathed for the sake of Allah in jihad. It is the be-all and end-all of religion; in fact it is the essence of the religion of Islam.

Activities

1. **Give a definition of Tawhid in linguistic terms and in Islamic terminology, quoting evidence from the Book of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.**

.....

2. **Mention some other names of the branch of knowledge that is called ilm at-Tawhid. Why is it called by these names?**

.....

3. **What is Tawhid based on? Quote evidence for Tawhid.**

.....

4. **Based on Quranic texts, explain the importance of Tawhid.**

.....

The meaning of the word of Tawhid "Laa ilaaha illa Allah"

Laa ilaaha illa Allah is the word of pure Tawhid. It is the greatest obligation that Allah has enjoined upon His slaves, and its relation to faith is like that of the head to the body.

There are many texts which speak of its virtue, including the following:

The report narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim from Abdullah ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما, who said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **«Islam is built upon five [pillars]: the testimony that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; establishing regular prayer (salat); paying zakat; Hajj (pilgrimage) and fasting Ramadan.»**

The Prophet ﷺ said: **«The best word that I and the Prophets before me said is: "Laa ilaaha illa Allah wahdahu laa shareeka lah, lahu'l-mulk wa lahu'l-hamd wa huwa ala kulli shay'in qadeer (there is no god worthy of worship except Allah Alone, with no partner or associate. His is the Dominion and to Him be praise, and He is able to do all things)."»** Narrated by at-Tirmidhi; classed as hasan by al-Albani.

With regard to what is meant by Laa ilaaha illa Allah, it means that none is rightfully worshipped except Allah.

This phrase is composed of two main principles, as noted above in the pillars of Tawhid, namely negation and affirmation.

What is meant by negation is shunning every type of object of worship except Allah عز وجل.

What is meant by affirmation is devoting all types of worship solely to Allah عز وجل Alone, in the manner that He has prescribed on the lips of His messengers عليهم السلام.

The one who merely affirms that Allah is deserving of worship, without believing firmly that worship of any other objects of worship is false, or regarding those objects of worship as false, has not complied fully with the word of Tawhid which brings salvation on the Day of Resurrection.

Similarly, if someone denies that anything is to be worshipped, and goes no further than that, then this is negation only, and he has not affirmed the oneness of Allah. Rather both elements, negation and affirmation, are essential.

The one who has any knowledge of the Arabic language will realize that the way in which the word of Tawhid – Laa ilaaha illa Allah – is expressed includes both negation and affirmation, and both of them are required.

This is affirmed in several other places. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], "Worship Allah and avoid Taghut"}* [an-Nahl 16:36].

The affirmation is seen in the phrase {Worship Allah}.

The negation is seen in the phrase {and avoid Taghut}.

This is similar to the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him}* [an-Nisa 4:36]. This is a command to worship Allah and a prohibition on directing worship to anyone or anything other than Him. Thus it combines the negation and the affirmation.

In the verse *{That you not worship except Allah}* [Hud 11:26], we see the prohibition on worshipping anything or anyone other than Allah, and the command to worship Him Alone, associating nothing with Him.

In the words of Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, *{Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship, Except for He who created me}* [az-Zukhruf 43:26-27], we also see the negation and the affirmation.

Negation and Affirmation

The phrase *{I am disassociated from that which you worship}* is the negation of worship in general terms.

The phrase *{Except for He who created me}* is an affirmation of worship for Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ Alone.

Thus it is essential for the one who wants to truly believe in the oneness of Allah (Tawhid) to combine both pillars, or essential parts, thereof, namely negation and affirmation.

That is negation of all false objects of worship, and affirmation of worship of the One Who is deserving of worship, who is Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, to the exclusion of all others.

Conditions of the word of Tawhid, Laa ilaaha illa Allah.

It is not sufficient merely to utter the phrase Laa ilaaha illa Allah, paying lip service to it; rather it has conditions that must be fulfilled, which are as follows:

1

Sincerity, which means seeking the pleasure of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ by means of this word (kalimah).

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth, and to establish prayer and to give zakah. And that is the correct religion}* [al-Bayinah 98:5].

2

Knowing what it means, which is understanding the meaning of this word and what it implies of negation and affirmation. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{So know, [O Muhammad], that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah and ask forgiveness for your sin}* [Muhammad 47:19].

3

Certainty, so no doubt concerning this word or what it implies should occur to the one who says it.

That is because Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{The believers are only the ones who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then doubt not}* [al-Hujurat 49:15].

The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah. No one meets Allah believing in that, not doubting it, but he will enter Paradise.»** Narrated by Muslim.

4

Accepting what this word implies wholeheartedly and affirming it verbally.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Indeed they, when it was said to them, "There is no god worthy of worship but Allah" were arrogant}* [as-Saffat 37:35].

5

Complying with what this word indicates, that the individual should do what Allah commands him to do, and refrain from what Allah forbids him to do. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And whoever submits his face to Allah while he is a doer of good - then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold. And to Allah will be the outcome of [all] matters}* [Luqman 31:22].

6

Being truthful (sidq), saying this word sincerely, from the heart.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And of the people are some who say, "We believe in Allah and the Last Day," but they are not believers. They [think to] deceive Allah and those who believe, but they deceive not except themselves and perceive [it] not}* [al-Baqarah 2:8-9].

7

Loving the word of Tawhid and what it means, loving those who believe in it, and hating its opposite, namely shirk.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And [yet], among the people are those who take other than Allah as equals [to Him]. They love them as they [should] love Allah}* [al-Baqarah 2:165].

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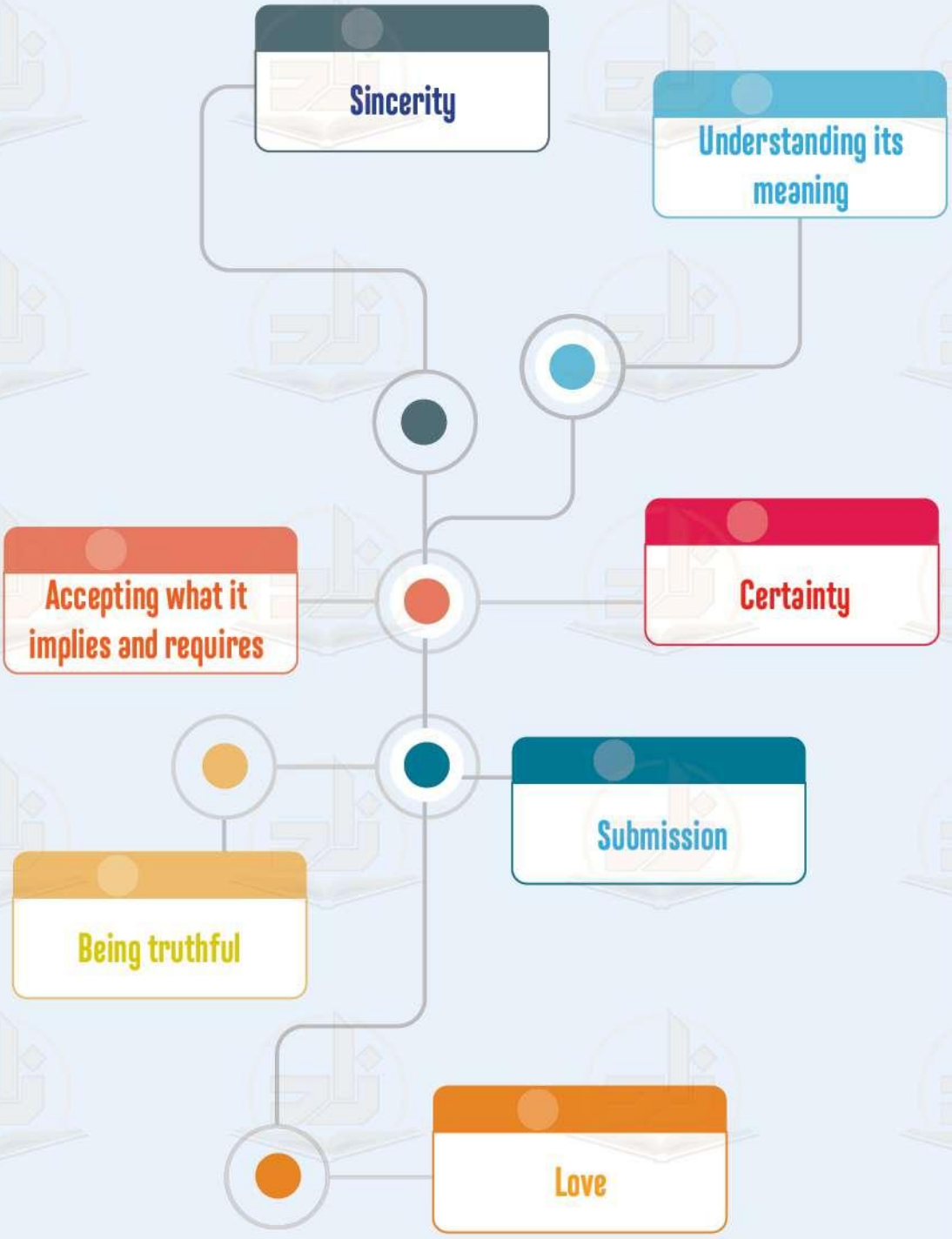
It was said to al-Hasan: Some people say that whoever says Laa ilaaha illa Allah will enter Paradise. He said: Whoever says Laa ilaaha illa Allah and complies with its requirements and fulfils the obligations that result from saying it will enter Paradise.

Saying ***Laa ilaaha illa Allah*** will not benefit the one who says it unless he acts in accordance with it and fulfils its conditions.

The conditions of the word of Tawhid "Laa ilaaha illa Allah":



The one who thinks that Tawhid ar-rububiyah (affirming the oneness of divine Lordship) is the ultimate aim of the message of the messengers is mistaken.

One of the mistaken notions that are widespread among large numbers of Muslims is the belief that Tawhid ar-rububiyah (affirming the oneness of divine Lordship) – which means affirming that Allah Alone is the Creator, Controller, Provider and so on – is the purpose for which the messengers were sent, and that it is what Allah asks of His slaves. But that is not the case. We have noted above that this type of Tawhid was affirmed by the polytheists, but it is not the purpose for which Allah sent the messengers or revealed the Books.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ said, commanding His Prophet to ask them who grants them provision, controls their affairs and created them: *{Say, "Who provides for you from the heaven and the earth? Or who controls hearing and sight and who brings the living out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living and who arranges [every] matter?" They will say, "Allah," so say, "Then will you not fear Him?"}* [Yunus 10:31].

And Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And if you asked them, "Who created the heavens and earth?" they would surely say, "Allah"}* [Luqman 31:25].

{Say, "In whose hand is the realm of all things - and He protects while none can protect against Him - if you should know?" They will say, "[All belongs] to Allah." Say, "Then how are you deluded?"} [al-Mu'minun 23:88-89].

And there are many texts which affirm that.

Thus they affirmed this concept, and had no problem with it, and they had no objection to it.

Rather what they objected to was worshipping Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ Alone and devoting all acts of worship to Him Alone. Therefore this is the true Tawhid concerning which the Books were revealed and the prophets عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ were sent.

Ibn al-Qayyim said: Hence Laa ilaaha illa Allah is the best of good deeds, and Tawhid al-uluhiyah, which is the word Laa ilaaha illa Allah, is the heart of the matter. As for Tawhid ar-rububiyah (oneness of divine Lordship), which all creatures affirm, it is not sufficient on its own, even though it is essential and it is a proof against the one who denies Tawhid al-uluhiyah (worshipping Allah Alone). End quote.

Ibn al-Qayyim رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ also said: The highest level that one should attain with regard to Tawhid ar-rububiyah is that he should not believe in anyone as Lord, Creator and controller except Allah, and that is the truth. But Tawhid ar-rububiyah on its own is not sufficient to attain salvation, and believing in it and attaining a state where you see nothing but Allah is not the ultimate aim and goal of those who believe in the oneness of Allah. Rather the supreme goal, after which there is no other goal, is to be completely focused on worshipping Allah Alone (Tawhid al-uluhiyah). End quote.

Thus we may understand that the shirk of the disbelievers was not because of any belief that there was someone else with Allah in control of the universe in terms of creation, command, giving life, causing death, granting provision or any other aspect of Lordship. Rather their shirk was because they devoted worship to entities other than Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

To help us understand this matter more, and to realize that the main goal is to worship Allah Alone, we may note the following:

1. We find that the Quranic message focuses on calling people to worship Allah Alone, and this is the main idea behind most of the Quranic texts. This is in contrast to the issue of the oneness of divine Lordship, which is mentioned in the Quran as if it is a given concerning which there is no dispute or argument.

2. The fighting that took place between the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and the polytheists had nothing to do with the oneness of divine Lordship (Tawhid ar-rububiyah), because they believed in it. Rather it had to do with worshipping Allah Alone (Tawhid al-uluhiyah). Hence the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **«I have been commanded to fight the people until they say Laa ilaaha illa Allah. Whoever says Laa ilaaha illa Allah has protected his life and his wealth from me, except in cases dictated by Islamic law, and his reckoning will be with Allah.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

If someone were to ask: But don't we worship Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ Alone and worship none besides Allah? So what is the problem?

The answer is: This is true, and many Muslims devote their worship to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ Alone, and their aim and goal is to please Him Alone, in addition to their affirmation that He Alone is the Creator, the Provider, the One Who gives life and causes death, and so on. But they fall into some practices of shirk, such as offering sacrifices to someone other than Allah, making vows to someone other than Allah, swearing oaths by someone or something other than Allah, travelling for the purpose of visiting mosques where the awliya (saints) are buried, addressing supplications (dua) and requests for help to them, and building mosques over the graves of the righteous. These, unfortunately, are manifestations of shirk that are found in many Muslim lands, which we will discuss in detail below.

Activities

1. What is meant by the word of Tawhid (kalimat at-Tawhid), and what is its virtue? Is it sufficient for one to enter Islam?
2. What are the pillars or essential parts of the word of Tawhid? Explain what you say, quoting from texts of the Quran.
3. What is the mistake that people make with regard to the concept of rububiyah (divine Lordship) and the concept of uluhiyah (worshipping Allah Alone)? How would you respond to that?
4. What is the type of Tawhid concerning which the disbelievers agreed with the believers? What is the type of Tawhid that they objected to and emphatically rejected?
5. How can you prove that worshipping Allah Alone is the ultimate purpose of creation?
6. What are the manifestations and practices of shirk that are found nowadays in Muslim lands?
7. Put a checkmark (✓) next to the correct sentences and a cross mark (✗) next to the incorrect sentences in the following list:

a. Tawhid al-uluhiyah means devoting to Allah Alone that which is His exclusive right, such as supplication, vows and sacrifices. ( )

b. The evidence for devoting worship to Allah Alone includes the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], "Worship Allah and avoid Taghut"}* [an-Nahl 16:36]. ( )

c. The purpose behind the creation of the jinn and humankind is that they should affirm the oneness of divine Lordship (Tawhid ar-rububiyah). ( )

d. The first obligation of the accountable person is to learn that worship should be devoted to Allah Alone (Tawhid al-uluhiyah). ( )

e. The dispute between the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and the polytheist Arabs of the Jahiliyyah had to do with affirming the oneness of divine Lordship (Tawhid ar-rububiyah). ( )

2

Worship (ibadah)

In this unit we will study

Worship (ibadah)

Types of worship

Conditions of worship

Worship (ibadah)

Definition of ibadah (worship):

In linguistic terms, the Arabic word ibadah refers to obeying with complete submission and humility.

In Islamic terminology, ibadah refers to submission and humbling oneself before Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ for the purpose of drawing closer to Him in the ways that He has prescribed, accompanied with love and veneration.

Or, as it was defined by Ibn Taymiyyah رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ, ibadah is "a concise and comprehensive term that includes everything that Allah loves and is pleased with of words and deeds, both hidden and visible."

It is the ultimate purpose of creation, and it is the noble and high rank that is attained by the elite of creation, hence Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ has enjoined it (ibadah) in more than one place in His holy Book.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me}* [adh-Dhariyat 51:56].

{And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], "Worship Allah and avoid Taghut"} [an-Nahl 16:36].

{And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that, "There is no god worthy of worship except Me, so worship Me"} [al-Anbiya 21:25].

It is important to understand that the way in which the verse *{And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty (yaqeen)}* [al-Hijr 15:99] is interpreted by some heretics who claim to be Sufis – that what is meant by "certainty (yaqeen)" is attaining a high level of knowledge about Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and that this verse means that when someone attains such knowledge of Allah, a state that is known as certainty (yaqeen), acts of worship and obligatory duties are waived in his case, because attaining that level of certainty (yaqeen) is the ultimate purpose of worship (ibadah) – is wrong.

Ash-Shinqeeti said: Interpreting the verse in this manner is tantamount to disbelief in Allah and is heresy that puts one beyond the bounds of Islam, according to scholarly consensus. This type of interpretation of the verse is false; rather it is toying with the text. End quote.

The Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, who is the leader of mankind and the leader of the devoted worshippers, persisted in worship until the last moment of his life. If religious duties are waived when one attains a certain rank, then the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would be the most entitled of all people to that!

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Indeed this, your religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so worship Me}* [al-Anbiya 21:92].

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ commanded His Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to continue worshipping Him until he died, as He said: *{And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty (death)}* [al-Hijr 15:99].

Allah warns against being too arrogant to worship Him, as He says: *{And your Lord says, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you." Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible}* [Ghafir 40:60].

Worship is the characteristic practice of the noble angels. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Indeed, those who are near your Lord are not prevented by arrogance from His worship, and they exalt Him, and to Him they prostrate}* [al-A'raf 7:206].

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ describes the elite of His creation as His servants or slaves (ibad – which comes from the same root as ibadah), as He عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{A spring of which the [righteous] servants of Allah will drink; they will make it gush forth in force [and abundance]}* [al-Insan 76:6].

{And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily} [al-Furqan 25:63].

And Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says concerning the Messiah, whom the Christians regard as divine: *{Jesus was not but a servant upon whom We bestowed favor}* [az-Zukhruf 43:59].

This is how our Prophet Muhammad صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was described in the most sublime of situations. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al- Aqsa}* [al-Isra 17:1].

And Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{[All] praise is [due] to Allah, who has sent down upon His Servant the Book and has not made therein any deviance}* [al-Kahf 18:1].

Types of worship (ibadah):

Worship of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ may be divided into two types:

The first type is universal submission and servitude (ibadah kawniyyah). This is submission to the universal decree of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and this includes all of creation; no one is exempt from it. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{There is no one in the heavens and earth but that he comes to the Most Merciful as a servant}* [Maryam 19:93]. This includes both believers and disbelievers.

The second type is submission and servitude in a religious sense (ibadah shar'iyah), which is submission to the command of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ as mentioned in the religious texts. This applies only to those who obey Allah and follow what the messengers brought, as is mentioned in the verse: *{And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily}* [al-Furqan 25:63].

The first category is not something praiseworthy, because it is not done by a person's action or choice.

The second category is something praiseworthy, because it is done by a person's choice and action.

The pillars or essential parts of worship:

Worship has two pillars or essential parts:

The first pillar is:

Perfect submission and humility before Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

What is meant is that the individual humbles himself before Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, submits to Him and shows humility before Him.

There are four categories of humility before Allah, as stated by Ibn al-Qayyim:

1

The first is common to all people; it is humility based on need for Allah. All the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth need Him, and He is the only One Who has no need of them. All the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth ask of Him, and He does not ask of anyone.

2

The second is the humility of obedience and servitude, which is humility by choice. This is only for those who obey Allah, and it is the essence of servitude (ubudiyah).

3

The third is humility based on love. The more a person loves Him, the more he shows humility towards Him.

4

The fourth is the humility that results from sin and transgression.

If someone attains all of these four categories, then his humility and submission to Allah will be more perfect and complete. That is when he submits to Him out of fear, awe, love, longing, obedience and need. End quote.

The second pillar is:

perfect love.

Ibn al-Qayyim said: Worship (ibadah) is the highest level of love. In Arabic, it is said abbadahu al-hubb (lit. "love has enslaved him") when love has full control over a person. End quote.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said: Worship (ibadah) combines the utmost love and the utmost humility. So the devoted worshipper is loving and obedient.

The evidence for that is the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Say, [O Muhammad], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful"}* [Aal Imran 3:31]. Thus Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ has made following His Messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ a sign of the sincerity of a person's love for Him. This indicates that love requires following the beloved.

If there is no following of the beloved and no obedience, then the one who claims to love is lying.

Thus servitude to Allah rests on these two pillars: utmost love and utmost humility.

And their foundation is:

1. Realizing the blessings and favours that Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ bestows on His slave, for this will generate love for Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

2. Realizing one's own faults and many sins and shortcomings. This will generate a sense of utmost humility before Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

If a person bears these two things in mind in his journey to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, his enemy will never gain the upper hand over him, except when he slips and is unaware, and even then, Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ will quickly save him and bestow His mercy upon him.

The evidence for that is the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{So We responded to him, and We gave to him John, and amended for him his wife. Indeed, they used to hasten to good deeds and supplicate Us in hope and fear}* [al-Anbiya 21:90].

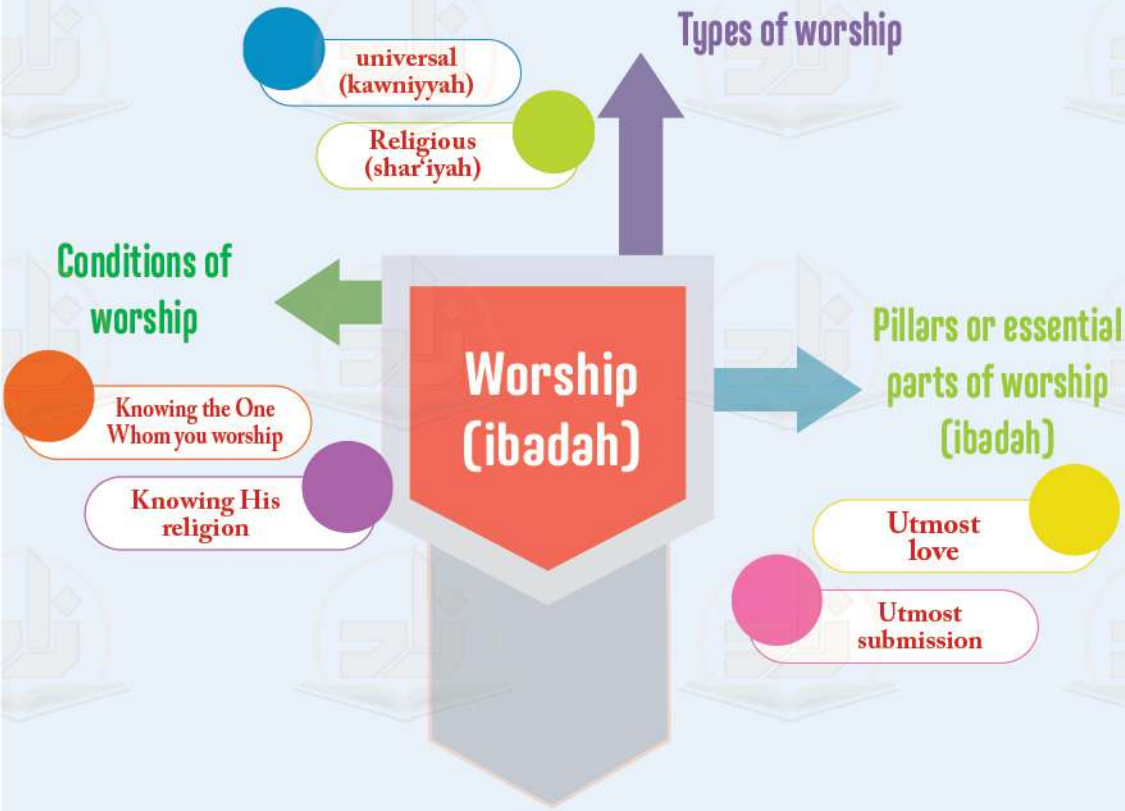
Thus love creates motive, and veneration of Allah creates submission, humility and fear of Him.

Conditions of worship:

There are two conditions of worship, without which it is not valid:

The first is knowing the One Whom you worship, namely Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. You cannot develop proper humility and submission to the One Whom you worship except by knowing Him عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and learning what He possesses of names and attributes, and what is meant by His divinity (and worshipping Him Alone) and His Lordship.

The second is knowing His religion, because it is not possible to worship Allah except by complying with the commands of the One Whom you are worshipping and heeding His prohibitions, and His commands and prohibitions are His religion. So it is essential to learn about His religion first, so that you can worship Allah in the correct manner, otherwise you may fall into error and innovation.



There are two conditions for worship to be accepted:

The first: sincerely devoting worship to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ Alone.

The second: following the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

The evidence for that is the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord - let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone}* [al-Kahf 18:110].

Sincere devotion means doing an action for the sake of Allah Alone, and the righteous deed is that which is done in accordance with the teachings of the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

Al-Fudayl ibn Iyad رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ said, concerning the verse *{that He might test you as to which of you is best in deed}* [Hud 11:7]: [That is,] the most sincere and the most correct. They said: O Abu Ali, what is the most sincere and the most correct? He said: If the deed is sincere but not correct, it will not be accepted, and if it is correct but not sincere, it will not be accepted, unless it is both sincere and correct. That which is sincere is that which is for Allah Alone, and that which is correct is that which is in accordance with the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

Activities

1. **Define worship (ibadah) and quote some verses from the Quran in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ enjoins it.**
2. **What is the attitude of the Sufis regarding the verse** *{And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty}* [al-Hijr 15:99]**? How would you respond to them?**
3. **What are the categories of worship (ibadah)? In which of the two categories does the servitude (ubudiyah) of the prophets, that of Abu Jahl, and that of the Shaytan come?**
4. **Mention the pillars or essential parts of servitude (ubudiyah) and explain them. How can worship (ibadah) be acceptable and valid? Quote evidence for what you say.**

3

Oneness of the divine names and attributes (Tawhid al-asma wa's-sifat)

In this unit we will study

Oneness of the divine names and attributes (Tawhid al-asma wa's-sifat)

Ways in which the divine attributes are misinterpreted and distorted

(denying the attributes, likening Allah to His creation, discussing how His attributes are)

Evidence to prove the Oneness of the divine names and attributes (Tawhid al-asma wa's-sifat)

Meaning of the Oneness of the divine names and attributes (Tawhid al-asma wa's-sifat):

What is meant is to believe in the names and attributes of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ that are mentioned in His Book and in the Sunnah of His Messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, believing in their meanings and rulings in a manner that is appropriate to the majesty of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, without misinterpreting or distorting them, denying them, discussing how they are or likening them to the attributes of His creation.

This is the definition of the divine names and attributes given by Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah. **The way in which they discuss this matter is as follows:**

1. With regard to affirmation:

They affirm that which Allah affirmed for Himself in His Book or on the lips of His Messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, without misinterpreting or distorting, denying, discussing how or likening Him to His creation.

2. With regard to negation:

They negate that which Allah negated for Himself in His Book or on the lips of His Messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, whilst believing and affirming the perfect quality that is opposite to that which Allah negated for Himself. This will be explained below.

3. That concerning which there is neither negation nor affirmation:

This refers to matters concerning which the scholars differed, such as whether Allah has a physical body, whether He occupies space, whether He has a direction, and so on. Their way of addressing such matters is as follows:

They refrain from using **these terms**, because there is nothing in the Quran or Sunnah to indicate whether they are to be negated or affirmed.

With regard to what such **terms mean**, they examine the matter further. If what is meant by it is false and incorrect, and Allah is far above that, then they reject it. If what is meant is true, and is not unbefitting with regard to Allah, then they accept it. This will be explained below.

This is what is required with regard to this issue, because discussing in detail what must be, what is possible and what is not possible with regard to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ is something that cannot be known except by referring to the Quran and Sunnah. Whatever is in accordance with them is to be accepted, and whatever is contrary to them is to be rejected.

The basic principle of Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah with regard to the topic of the divine names and attributes is the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing}* [ash-Shura 42:11].

In this verse, there is negation of any resemblance between the Creator and the created being in every aspect, yet it also affirms the divine attributes of hearing and seeing. This indicates that what is affirmed of Allah's hearing and seeing is not like what is affirmed for created beings of these two attributes.

This verse represents the principle followed by Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah, which is to deny that the attributes of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ could be likened to those of created beings, whilst affirming the divine attributes in a manner that is befitting to Allah's majesty.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Certainly has Allah heard the speech of the one who argues with you, [O Muhammad], concerning her husband and directs her complaint to Allah. And Allah hears your dialogue; indeed, Allah is Hearing and Seeing}* [al-Mujadilah 58:1].

In Sahih al-Bukhari it is narrated in a mu'allaq report that Aisha رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا said: Praise be to Allah Whose hearing encompasses all sounds. The woman who argued came to the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to speak to him, whilst I was in some corner of the house and could not hear. Then Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ revealed the words: *{Certainly has Allah heard the speech of the one who argues with you, [O Muhammad], concerning her husband ...}* [al-Mujadilah 58:1].

Other evidence that the attributes of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ cannot be likened or compared to those of His creation is seen in the verse: *{So do not assert similarities to Allah}* [an-Nahl 16:74].

At-Tabari said: So do not compare Allah to anything, and do not liken Him to what you think is similar, for there is nothing like Him or similar to Him.

What is said about His hearing and seeing may also be said about other divine attributes.

It is important to understand that every attribute that is affirmed for Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ is a perfect attribute for which He is to be praised; there is no shortcoming whatsoever in those attributes. All the attributes of Allah جَلَّ وَعَلَا are to be affirmed in the most perfect way.

Everything that Allah negates for Himself is an imperfect attribute and is contrary to His inevitable perfection. All attributes of imperfection are impossible in the case of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, because He must inevitably be perfect.

There is a principle which says that whenever Allah negates something for Himself, what is meant is that this attribute should be negated and the opposite attribute must be affirmed in a perfect sense.

For example, Allah negates for Himself injustice. What is meant is that Allah cannot be unjust, and at the same time it means that the opposite, which is justice, must be affirmed in a perfect sense.

Another example is: Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ negates for Himself weariness, which is fatigue. What is meant is that Allah cannot be affected by weariness, and at the same time it means that the opposite, which is strength, must be affirmed in a perfect sense.

Sleep is also negated, because the perfect nature of His being the Sustainer of all existence is affirmed. And the same applies to everything that Allah has negated for Himself. And Allah knows best.

We often hear the words "without distorting, denying, discussing how or likening." What does that mean?

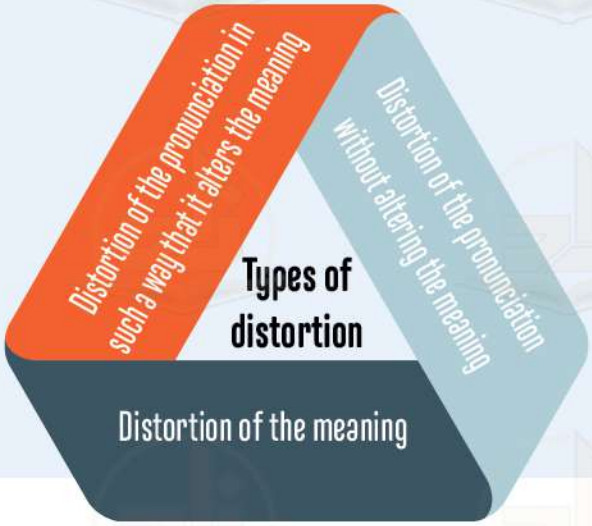
The answer is:

Distorting means altering either the wording or the meaning of the text. This is of three types:

1. **The first type** is distortion of the pronunciation in such a way that it alters the meaning, such as when some of them distort the words *{wa kallama Allahu Moosaa takleeman (And Allah spoke to Moses with [direct] speech)}* [an-Nisa 4:164], reading the phrase as "wa kallama **Allaha** Musa takleeman", which distorts the meaning and suggests that the one who spoke was Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

2. **The second type** is distortion of the pronunciation without altering the meaning, such as changing *{Al-hamdu Lillaahi Rabb il-'aalameen}* to "Alhamda Lillahi Rabb al-Aalamin." This usually stems from not knowing how to pronounce it correctly, because the one who does that usually has no ulterior motive.

3. **The third type** is distortion of the meaning, which means interpreting a word in a way other than the apparent meaning without evidence, such as interpreting the two hands that are attributed to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ as referring to strength and blessing, and the like, as some misinterpret the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Rather, both His hands are extended}* [al-Ma'idah 5:64].



Denying: **this means denying the names and attributes that must be attributed to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, or denying some of them. It is of two types:**

1. Complete denial

such as the denial of the Jahamis, who denied the divine attributes, and the extremists among them also denied the divine names.

2. Partial denial

such as the denial of the Ash'aris who deny some of the divine attributes and not others.

The difference between distortion and denial:

Distortion is a rejection of the correct meaning as indicated by the texts, and replacing it with another, incorrect meaning.

Denial, on the other hand, is a rejection of the correct meaning, without replacing it with any other meaning.

The first one of this ummah who is known for denying the divine attributes is al-Ja'd ibn Dirham.

Discussing how: This refers to speaking of how an attribute is, such as if someone says: The Hand of Allah is like this… Or: His descent to the lowest heaven is like this…

Likening (tamtheel): this means affirming that one thing is like another.

A similar concept is tashbeeh, which means affirming that one thing is similar to another.

Tamtheel implies that one thing is like another in every respect.

Tashbeeh means that two things are similar and are the same in most attributes. These two terms may be used interchangeably.

The difference between likening (tamtheel or tashbeeh) and discussing how is twofold:

- **The first difference** is that discussing how means speaking about how a thing is, either in general terms (not comparing it to anything else) or in specific terms, by comparing it to something else.

  As for likening (tamtheel or tashbeeh), it means speaking about attributes in specific terms by likening it or comparing it to something else.

  Based on that, discussing how is more general than likening or comparing.

- **The second difference** is that discussing how is only used when discussing the divine **attributes,** whereas likening and comparing may be used when discussing **estimates, attributes and essence**.

Moreover, the likening (tashbeeh) that was the cause of many people being misled is of two types:

- **The first type** is likening the created being to the Creator.

- **The second type** is likening the Creator to the created being.

As for likening the created being to the Creator, what it means is attributing something to the created being that is unique to the Creator, whether it comes under the heading of actions, rights or attributes. This takes three forms:

1. That which is done by the one who associates others with Allah in His Lordship, and claims that there is another creator alongside Allah.

2. That which is done by the polytheists with their idols, as they claim that they have a right to be worshipped, so they worship them alongside Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

3. That which is done by those who go to extremes in praising the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ or anyone else, such as what al-Busayri said [in al-Burdah]: "Part of your generous gifts is this world and its counterpart [the Hereafter], and part of your knowledge is knowledge of al-Lawh al-Mahfuz and what the Pen wrote."

With regard to likening the Creator to the created being, what it means is affirming for Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, with regard to His Essence and unique attributes, what is affirmed for the created being, such as saying: The two Hands of Allah are like the two hands of created beings, and His rising over His Throne is like their sitting, and so on.

It was said that the first one who promoted this type of likening was Hisham ibn al-Hakam ar-Rafidi. And Allah knows best.

Who were the Jahamis?

The Jahamis were one of the groups of Islamic philosophers who claimed to be Muslims, but they held wrong views about belief (Aqeedah) with regard to the concept of faith, and with regard to the attributes and names of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. This group is named after its founder, al-Jahm ibn Safwan al-Khurasani.

al-Jahm ibn Safwan led many people astray; he was followed in his views by a man called Wasil ibn Ataa, and another man called Amr ibn Ubayd. The views of the Mutazila are ascribed to them.

The Jahamis are the ones who said that man has no power at all; rather he is like an inanimate object. They also said that Paradise and Hell will cease to exist after their people enter them, so that there will be nothing in existence except Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and that faith means acknowledging Allah only, and disbelief means ignorance of Him only. Thus they went against the texts of the Quran and Sunnah.

Al-Ja'd ibn Dirham was the shaykh of al-Jahm ibn Safwan. He was an innovator who went astray; he claimed that Allah did not take Ibrahim as a khaleel (close friend), and that He did not speak to Musa. He was the first one to introduce the view that the Quran is created, and to deny the attributes of Allah.

It is narrated that Khalid ibn Abdillah al-Qasri addressed the people on the Day of Sacrifice (al-Adha) in Wasit, Iraq, and said: O people, offer your sacrifices; may Allah accept your sacrifices. I am going to sacrifice (execute) al-Ja'd ibn Dirham, because he claimed that Allah did not take Ibrahim as a khaleel (close friend), and that He did not speak to Musa. Then he came down and executed him. This is a well-known story.

- Thus the chain began with al-Ja'd ibn Dirham, from whom al-Jahm ibn Safwan learned.
- He in turn was followed by Wasil ibn Ataa and Amr ibn Ubayd.

Who were the Mutazila?

The Mutazila were a group of innovators who emerged at the end of the Umayyad era and flourished during the Abbasid era. They were followers of a man called Wasil ibn Ataa. They are known for giving precedence over the religious texts to reason and to the five principles which are regarded as a common denominator between all their sects. They are also known as the Qadaris, the Wa'eedis and the Adlis.

They are called Mutazila because of their founder's withdrawal (i'tizal) from the majlis of al-Hasan al-Basri رحمه الله, after he disagreed with him concerning the ruling on the fasiq (evildoer). Al-Hasan expelled Wasil ibn Ataa from his majlis when he said that the fasiq is neither a believer nor a disbeliever; rather he is in a state between those two.

The Mutazila rely solely on reason in their quest to understand Islamic belief/creed (Aqeedah), because they were influenced by some philosophical ideas that they came across, which led to them deviating from the Aqeedah of Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah.

One of the outcomes of their relying on reason is that they would decide whether things were good or bad on the basis of rational thinking only.

Because of their reliance on reason, they misinterpreted or denied the divine attributes.

Another outcome of their reliance on reason was that their prominent figures impugned some of the senior Sahabah, spoke ill of them and accused them of lying, to the extent that they said that their testimony was not to be accepted. Then the Mutazila summed up their school of thought in the following five principles:

1. **Tawhid,** by which they meant denying the attributes of Allah, and on the basis of that they said that the Quran is created.
2. **Justice,** which according to them meant that the individual creates his own deeds. Hence they are called the Magians of this ummah.
3. **Promise and warning,** by which they meant that the one who commits major sin will inevitably be punished, and that Allah will not forgive him unless he repents.
4. **The state between two states,** which means that the one who commits a major sin is in a state between faith and disbelief, so he is neither a believer nor a disbeliever.
5. **Enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong,** by which they mean armed rebellion against the ruler.

The evidence for affirming Tawhid al-asma wa's-sifat (the oneness of the divine names and attributes):

There is a great deal of this evidence, which includes the following:

1. The verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And to Allah belong the best names, so invoke Him by them. And leave [the company of] those who practice deviation concerning His names. They will be recompensed for what they have been doing}* [al-A'raf 7:180].

2. The verse in which He عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Say, "Call upon Allah or call upon the Most Merciful. Whichever [name] you call - to Him belong the best names"}* [al-Isra 17:110].

3. The verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Allah - there is no god worthy of worship except Him. To Him belong the best names}* [Ta-Ha 20:8].

4. The passage in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{He is Allah, other than whom there is no god worthy of worship, Knower of the unseen and the witnessed. He is the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. He is Allah, other than whom there is no god worthy of worship, the Sovereign, the Pure, the Perfection, the Bestower of Faith, the Overseer, the Exalted in Might, the Compeller, the Superior. Exalted is Allah above whatever they associate with Him He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor, the Fashioner; to Him belong the best names. Whatever is in the heavens and earth is exalting Him. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise}* [al-Hashr 59:22-24].

5. The verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing}* [ash-Shura 42:11].

6

The verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them – so worship Him and have patience for His worship. Do you know of any similarity to Him?}* [Maryam 19:65].

7

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: The Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Indeed Allah has ninety-nine names, one hundred less one. Whoever learns them will enter Paradise.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

8

It was narrated that Ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«No person suffers any anxiety or grief, and says: 'O Allah, I am Your slave, son of Your slave, son of Your female slave, my forelock is in Your Hand, Your command over me is forever executed and Your decree over me is just. I ask You by every name belonging to You with which You named Yourself, or revealed in Your Book, or You taught to any of Your creation, or You have preserved in the knowledge of the unseen with You, that You make the Quran the life and light of my heart, and a departure for my sorrow and a release for my anxiety' but Allah will take away his sorrow and grief, and give him in their stead joy.»** Narrated by Ahmad; its isnad is sahih.

9

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: The Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«O Allah, You are the First (al-Awwal) and there is nothing before You, You are the Last (al-Aakhir) and there is nothing after You, You are the Most High (az-Zaahir) and there is nothing above You, and You are the Most Near (al-Batin) and there is nothing closer than You.»** Narrated by Muslim.

4

Profaning the names and attributes of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and types thereof

In this unit we will study

- Profaning the names and attributes of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and types thereof
- Ruling on profaning the names of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ
- Principles set out by Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah with regard to the names and attributes of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ
- Practical examples of affirming the names and attributes of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ according to what is mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah
- Types of divine attributes
- The general rule for understanding the nature of the divine attributes that are affirmed in the Quran and Sunnah
- Attributes that are neither negated nor affirmed in the Quran and Sunnah

Profaning the names and attributes of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ:

In Arabic, the word ilhad (translated here as profaning) refers to drifting away from the way in which a thing should be understood.

In Islamic terminology, with regard to the divine names and attributes, ilhad means interpreting them in a manner contrary to what one should believe concerning them.

The right way to understand the names and attributes of Allah is to understand these names and attributes according to the apparent meaning of the words, in a manner that is befitting to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, without distorting the meaning, denying the attributes, discussing how they are, or likening them to human attributes. We should also understand them in accordance with the principles followed by Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah in this regard, as mentioned above.

Types of profaning the divine names and attributes:

1

The first type is denying any of the divine names or any of the divine attributes to which these names refer.

For example: The one who denies that the name ar-Rahman (the Most Gracious) is one of the names of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, as the people of the Jahiliyyah did.

Or he affirms the names, but denies what they imply of attributes, as some of the innovators said: Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ is Most Merciful (ar-Raheem) without mercy, All-Hearing (as-Samee) without hearing.

2

The second type is calling Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ by names by which He did not call Himself, as some of the philosophers did when they called God "the First Cause"; and as the Christians did when they called God "the Father", and so on.

The reason why this is regarded as profaning the divine names is that the names of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ are limited to what is mentioned in the religious texts. Therefore it is not permissible for anyone to call Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ by any name by which He did not call Himself, because this comes under the heading of speaking about Allah without knowledge and of transgressing against the rights of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

3

The third type is believing that these names imply attributes of Allah that are the same as attributes of created beings, so they take them as evidence to prove that the divine attributes are the same as those of created beings.

The reason why this is regarded as profaning the divine names is that whoever believes that the names of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ indicate that Allah's attributes are like those of His creation has misunderstood the divine attributes and drifted away from a proper understanding of them, and he has interpreted the words of Allah and the words of His Messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ as confirming ideas of disbelief (kufr), because likening Allah to His creation constitutes disbelief, for it is disbelieving in the words of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ: *{There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing}* [ash-Shura 42:11] and *{Do you know of any similarity to Him?}* [Maryam 19:65].

Naeem ibn Hammad al-Khuza'i رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ said: Whoever likens Allah to His creation has disbelieved, and whoever denies what Allah has ascribed to Himself (of names and attributes) has disbelieved. There is nothing in what Allah has attributed to Himself that could be likened to the attributes of created beings.

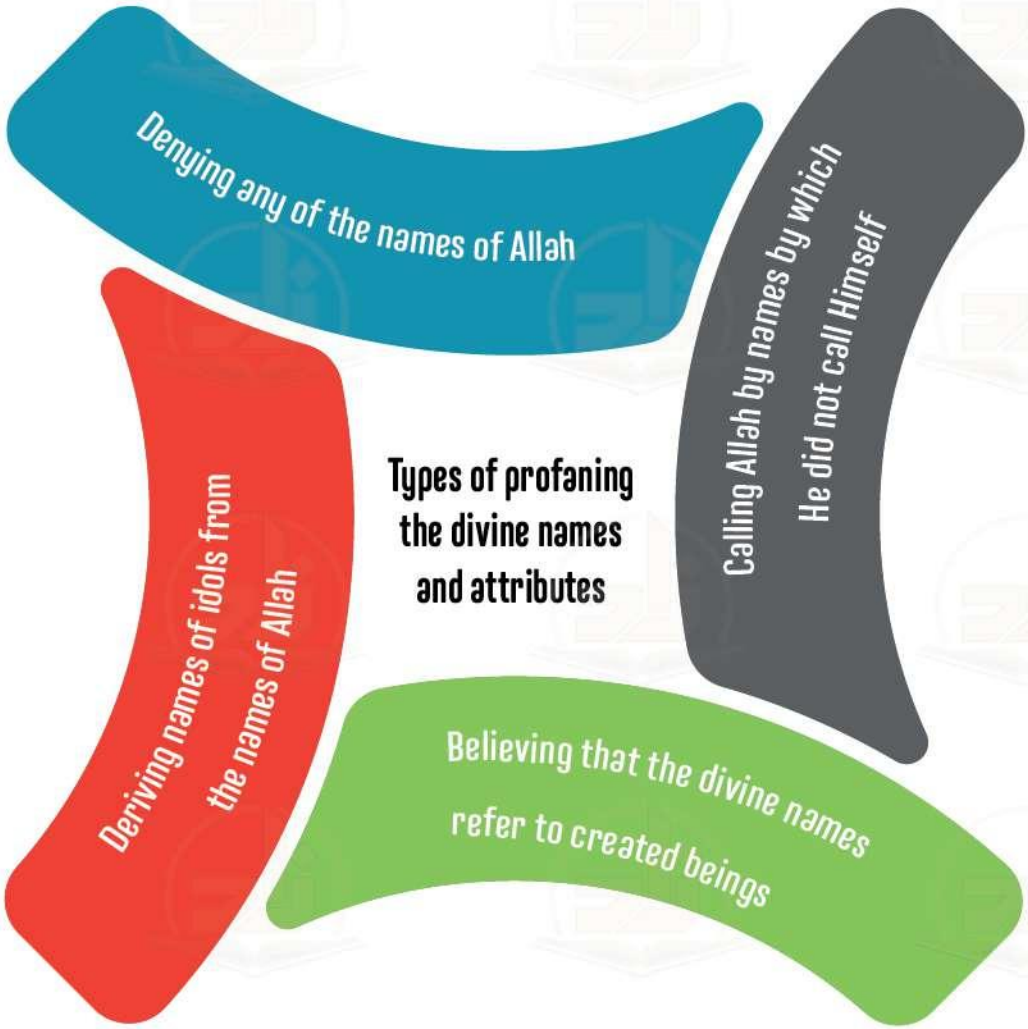
4

The fourth type is deriving names of idols from the names of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

Such as deriving the name al-Lat from al-Ilaah, and the name al-Uzza from al-Aziz, and the name Manat from al-Mannan.

That is because the names of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ are exclusively His, as He says: *{And to Allah belong the best names, so invoke Him by them}* [al-A'raf 7:180]. *{Allah – there is no god worthy of worship except Him. To Him belong the best names}* [Ta-Ha 20:8].

Just as worship should be devoted exclusively to Him, His names and attributes belong exclusively to Him. Therefore giving these names to others in a manner that is exclusively for Allah Alone is veering away from the way in which these names should be understood.


Types of profaning the divine names and attributes
Denying any of the names of Allah
Calling Allah by names by which He did not call Himself
Believing that the divine names refer to created beings
Deriving names of idols from the names of Allah

Ruling on profaning the names of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ:

Profaning the names of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ in any way is prohibited, because Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{To Allah belong the most beautiful names, so call on Him by them, and keep away from those who profane His names. They will be requited for what they do}* [al-A'raf 7:180].

In this verse there is a clear warning to those who profane the divine names and veer away from proper understanding of them.

What is meant by learning the names of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ that the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Indeed Allah has ninety-nine names, one hundred less one. Whoever learns them will enter Paradise.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

What is meant by learning them is a number of things:

a. **Listing them**
b. **Memorizing them**
c. **Understanding their meanings**
d. **Believing in them and venerating them**
e. **Calling upon Allah by them (in supplication or dua), which is of two types:**

- **The first type is** the supplication (dua) of praise and worship. Allah is to be praised by His sublime names and attributes, such as saying: Alhamdu Lillahi Rabb al-Aalamin (praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds); Yaa man bi yadika malakut us-samawaati wa'l-ard (O You in Whose Hand is the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth).
- **The second type is** the supplication (dua) of seeking and asking by choosing the divine name that is appropriate to what is sought. So you may ask for whatever you are seeking, mentioning the names of Allah that are appropriate to your situation and context, such as saying: Yaa Rahman irhamni (O Most Merciful, bestow mercy on me); Yaa Lateef ultuf bi (O Most Kind, show kindness to me); Yaa Jabbar ujbur kasri (O Consoler, console me); Yaa Ghafoor ighfir li (O Oft-Forgiving, forgive me), and so on.

It is not appropriate to say "O Most Strong (Yaa Qawiy), forgive me", because this divine name is not appropriate to the context. By the same token it is not appropriate to say, "O Oft-Forgiving (Yaa Ghafoor), heal me," and so on.

f. **Acting in accordance with their meanings**

This means taking the meanings into account, and committing yourself to what that implies. So if you say ar-Razzaq (the Provider), you should feel confident that Allah will provide, and that provision comes from Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ; you should put your trust in Him for provision, so that you will not pin your hopes on any created being.

If you say al-Hakeem (the Most Wise), you should submit, surrender and comply with all His commands, because they are all based on wisdom.

If you say al-Quddus (the Holy), you should bring to mind the fact that Allah is far above all shortcomings. And the same applies to all the other divine names.

Principles set out by Ahl as-Sunnah with regard to the names and attributes of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ:

1 The first principle is that we limit ourselves regarding the names of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ

What this means is that we limit ourselves only to what is mentioned in proven texts of the Quran and sahih Sunnah, and there is no room for ijtihad or personal views regarding this matter. Thus Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ cannot be called by any names other than those that are mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah, and nothing is to be added to that or taken away from it. The evidence for that is the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those [one] will be questioned}* [al-Isra 17:36]. Therefore we must adhere to proper etiquette and limit ourselves to learning those names that we find in the religious texts.

This is not a matter that can be worked out by means of ijtihad and personal opinion. Hence Allah cannot be called al-Aarif (the Knower), al-Aaqil (the Rational), al-Jaa'i (the Comer), al-Aati (the Comer), because there is nothing in the texts of the Quran and Sunnah to indicate that He عَزَّوَجَلَّ may be called by such names.

2 The second principle is that the names of Allah are all good

The names of Allah are all good, as is indicated by the following:

a. The verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And to Allah belong the best names, so invoke Him by them}* [al-A'raf 7:180].

b. The verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Say, "Call upon Allah or call upon the Most Merciful. Whichever [name] you call - to Him belong the best names"}* [al-Isra 17:110].

c. The verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Allah - there is no god worthy of worship except Him. To Him belong the best names}* [Ta-Ha 20:8].

d. The verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor, the Fashioner; to Him belong the best names}* [al-Hashr 59:24].

What is meant by His names being good or the best is that they are the most eloquent names. Hence the names of Allah are the best, most sublime and noblest of names, with the best and most sublime of meanings.

For example, the divine name al-Hayy (the Ever Living) is indicative of a perfect life that was not preceded by non-existence and will not be followed by death.

The divine name ar-Rahman (the Most Merciful) is indicative of perfect mercy (rahmah), of which Allah says: *{My mercy encompasses all things}* [al-A'raf 7:156], and Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ tells us that the angels say: *{Our Lord, You have encompassed all things in mercy and knowledge}* [Ghafir 40:7].

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ says of Allah's mercy: **«Allah is more merciful to His slaves than this woman to her child.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

3 The third principle is that the category of the divine attributes is broader in scope than that of the divine names

Thus the divine attributes may be based on one of the names or actions of Allah, whereas the divine names are much narrower in scope, and can only be based on texts which mention divine names; they cannot be based on divine attributes.

The attributes of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ include: coming, seizing, restraining, wreaking vengeance, intending, descending, and so on, as in the verses: *{And your Lord has come}* [al-Fajr 89:22] *{Do they await but that Allah should come to them in covers of clouds}* [al-Baqarah 2:210] *{so Allah seized them for their sins}* [Aal Imran 3:11] *{And He restrains the sky from falling upon the earth, unless by His permission}* [al-Hajj 22:65] *{Indeed, the vengeance of your Lord is severe}* [al-Buruj 85:12] *{Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship}* [al-Baqarah 2:185].

And the Prophet ﷺ said: **«Our Lord descends to the lowest heaven…»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Thus Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى may be described as having these attributes as they are mentioned, but He is not to be named on the basis of these attributes. So it cannot be said that **His names include al-Jaa'i (the Comer), al-Aati (the Comer), al-Aakhidh (the Seizer or Taker), al-Mumsik (the Restrainer), al-Batish (the Wreaker of vengeance), al-Mureed (the Intender) or an-Nazil (the Descender).**

With regard to the divine names, however, attributes are taken from them. Thus the divine name **al-Aalim** (the Knower) is indicative of the divine attribute of knowledge (ilm); the divine name **al-Ghafoor** (the Oft-Forgiving) is indicative of the divine attribute of forgiveness **(maghfirah)**; the divine name **al-Hakeem** (the Most Wise) is indicative of the divine attribute of wisdom **(hikmah)** and so on.

Thus we derive the divine attributes from the divine names, but we do not derive the divine names from the divine attributes.

4 The fourth principle is that the divine names are not limited to a specific number

The divine names are not limited to any particular number, and are not subject to any limitation. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ has names and attributes that He has kept to Himself in the knowledge of the unseen with Him, and they are not known to any angel who is close to Him or any Prophet who was sent, as the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«No person suffers any anxiety or grief, and says: 'O Allah, I am Your slave, son of Your slave, son of Your female slave, my forelock is in Your Hand, Your command over me is forever executed and Your decree over me is just. I ask You by every name belonging to You with which You named Yourself, or revealed in Your Book, or You taught to any of Your creation, or You have preserved in the knowledge of the unseen with You, that You make the Quran the life and light of my heart, and a departure for my sorrow and a release for my anxiety' but Allah will take away his sorrow and grief, and give him in their stead joy.»**

They said: O Messenger of Allah, should we not learn these words? He said: **«Yes indeed; whoever hears them should learn them.»** Narrated by Ahmad; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

5 The fifth principle is: Belief in the names of Allah implies a number of things:

1. Believing means affirming that name of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, in a manner that is befitting to Him.

2. Believing in the attributes indicated by the name.

3. Believing in the impact connected to the name, which is its meaning and implications.

Thus the divine name as-Samee (the All-Hearing) implies the following:

1. Affirmation of the name.

2. Affirmation of the divine attribute of hearing.

3. Affirmation of the impact of the name, which is:

Affirmation of its meaning, which is that Allah hears secret and private conversations; and affirmation of its implications, namely that it is essential to fear Allah, remember that He is watching, feel awe of Him, and feel too shy before Him to commit sin.

6. The sixth principle is: the way we understand the divine attributes is the same as the way we understand the divine Essence.

What this means is: there is nothing like unto Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ either in His Essence, His attributes, or His actions.

As we believe that Allah has an Essence, in a true sense, that is different from the essences of created beings – and there is no difference of scholarly opinion concerning that – likewise the divine attributes that are affirmed in the Quran and Sunnah are attributes in a true sense, that are different from the attributes of created beings. Thus the way in which we understand the divine Essence and the divine attributes is the same.

This is an important principle to follow when debating with one who denies the divine attributes whilst affirming the divine Essence, for affirmation of the divine Essence is something that is agreed upon by all the scholars of the ummah.

So if someone says: I do not affirm the divine attributes, because affirming them means likening Allah to His creation – exalted be Allah far above that – it may be said to him: You affirm that Allah has an Essence in a real sense, and you affirm that created beings also have essences; is this not likening Allah to His creation, according to your view?

If he says: I only affirm that Allah has an Essence that does resemble the essence of created beings, and this is the only way in which we can understand the Essence of Allah,

Then it may be said to him: Then by the same token, you should apply the same argument to the divine attributes. If the divine Essence is not like the essence of created beings, which is true, then the attributes of the divine Essence are not like the attributes of created beings.

If he says: How can I affirm a divine attribute when I do not know how it is? We say to him: In the same manner as you affirm the divine Essence when you do not know how it is!

The seventh principle is: the way we understand some of the divine attributes should be the same as the way we understand others.

What this means is that the way we understand some of the attributes of Allah, with regard to affirmation or negation, is the same as the way we understand some other attributes. This principle is addressed to those who affirm some of the divine attributes and deny others.

So if a man affirms some of the attributes of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ – such as life, knowledge, power, hearing, seeing, and so on – and he realizes that they are to be understood in a real sense, then he disputes about the attributes of love, pleasure, anger and so on, and he regards these as being metaphorical, then it should be said to him:

There is no difference between what you affirm of divine attributes and what you deny. That is because the way we understand some of the divine attributes is the same understanding that should be applied to the others.

As you affirm the divine attributes of life, knowledge, power, hearing and seeing, and you understand that they are not like the attributes that are affirmed for created beings, likewise you should affirm the divine attributes of love, pleasure and anger – as Allah has told us about Himself – without likening them to the attributes of created beings, otherwise you will be contradicting yourself.

Activities

Answer the following:

1. **What is meant by the oneness of the divine names and attributes (Tawhid al-asma wa's-sifat)? Quote two proofs which affirm that.**
2. **What is meant by learning in the hadith of the Prophet ﷺ, «Indeed Allah has ninety-nine names, one hundred less one. Whoever learns them will enter Paradise»?**
3. **Name three of the principles set out by Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah with regard to understanding the names and attributes of Allah.**
4. **Explain the principle, "The names of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ are limited to what is mentioned in the religious texts."**
5. **How does the principle "the way we understand the divine attributes is the same as the way we understand the divine Essence" form the strongest proof in establishing an argument?**
6. **What is the principle for understanding divine attributes that are neither negated nor affirmed in the Quran and Sunnah? Give an example of that.**
7. **Mention some of the good outcomes of believing in the names and attributes of Allah. Which of them is the most important in your opinion?**
8. **What is the impact on faith of believing in the divine names al-Aleem (the All-Knowing), al-Hakeem (the Most Wise), as-Samee (the All-Hearing), al-Qadeer (the All-Powerful) and al-Wahhab (the Bestower)?**

Practical examples of affirming the names and attributes of Allah according to the Quran and Sunnah

The names of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ include:

Al-Hayy al-Qayyum (the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence)

These two names are proven in the Quran and Sunnah. In the Qur'an, Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Allah - there is no god worthy of worship except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence}* [al-Baqarah 2:255].

In the Sunnah: it was narrated that Anas ibn Malik said: The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to Fatima رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا: **«What is preventing you from listening to the advice I give you? You should say when morning comes and when evening comes: 'O Ever-Living, O Sustainer of [all] existence, by Your mercy I seek help; rectify all my affairs and do not leave me in charge of my affairs even for the blink of an eye.'»** Narrated by al-Hakim; classed as hasan by al-Albani.

Al-Hameed (the Praiseworthy)

This divine name is proven by the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And know that Allah is Free of need and Praiseworthy}* [al-Baqarah 2:267].

From the Sunnah, in the hadith of Ka'b ibn Ujrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ about the tashahhud, it says that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ taught them to say: **«O Allah, send prayers upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, as You sent prayers upon Ibrahim and upon the family of Ibrahim; You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Ar-Rahman ar-Raheem (the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful)

These names are affirmed in the verses in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{[All] praise is [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful}* [al-Fatihah 1:2-3].

In the Sunnah, the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ instructed his scribe on the day of al-Hudaybiyyah, when he was drawing up the treaty between him and the polytheists, to write: **«In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.»** Narrated by Muslim.

Al-Haleem (the Forbearing)

The evidence for this name in the Quran is the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Indeed, He is Forbearing and Forgiving}* [Fatir 35:41].

In the Sunnah, there is the hadith of Ibn Abbas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا, according to which the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to say at times of distress: **«Laa ilaaha illa Allah al-Azeem al-Haleem (there is no god worthy of worship except Allah, the Almighty, the Forbearing).»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

The attributes of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ include the following:

Might or power (qudrah)

This is an integral attribute of the divine Essence which is affirmed in the Quran and Sunnah. What is meant by it being an attribute of the divine Essence is that it is an integral part of the Essence of Allah and is never separate from Him عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Indeed, Allah has power over all things}* [al-Baqarah 2:20].

In the Sunnah, there is the hadith of Uthman ibn Abi'l-As رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, according to which he complained to the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ about a pain that he had felt in his body since he had become Muslim. The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to him: **«Put your hand on the part of your body where you feel pain and say 'Bismillah (in the name of Allah)' three times, then say seven times, 'I seek refuge in the glory and power of Allah from the evil of what I feel and worry about.'»** Narrated by Muslim.

Knowledge (ilm)

It is an integral attribute of the divine Essence, which is proven in the Quran and Sunnah. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills}* [al-Baqarah 2:255].

In the Sunnah, there is the hadith of Jabir ibn Abdillah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا, which says that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to teach them to say in the istikharah prayer: **«O Allah, I seek Your guidance [in making a choice] by virtue of Your knowledge, and I seek ability by virtue of Your power.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari.

Will (iradah)

This is an attribute that is connected to the actions of Allah; it is proven in the Quran and Sunnah. The divine attributes that are connected to actions are the attributes that are dependent upon the will and decree of Allah; if He wills He does it, and if He wills He does not do it. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Whoever Allah wills to guide, He opens his heart to Islam, and whomever He wills to leave astray, He closes and constricts his heart, as if he were ascending to heaven}* [al-An'am 6:125].

In the Sunnah, there is the hadith of Abdullah ibn Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ say: **«If Allah wills to punish a people, the punishment will befall everyone who is among them, then they will be resurrected according to their deeds.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Exaltedness or highness (ulu)

This is an integral attribute of the divine Essence, which is proven in the Quran and Sunnah. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Exalt the name of your Lord, the Most High}* [al-A'la 87:1] *{They fear their Lord above them}* [an-Nahl 16:50].

In the Sunnah, there is the hadith of Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, in which it says: **«O Allah, You are the First (al-Awwal) and there is nothing before You, You are the Last (al-Aakhir) and there is nothing after You, You are the Most High (az-Zaahir) and there is nothing above You, and You are the Most Near (al-Batin) and there is nothing closer than You.»** Narrated by Muslim.

Rising over the Throne (istiwa)

This is an attribute that is connected to the actions of Allah; it is proven in the Quran and Sunnah. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{The Most Gracious rose over the Throne [in a manner that befits His Majesty]}* [Ta-Ha 20:5].

It was narrated that Qatadah ibn an-Numan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: I heard the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ say: **«When Allah finished creation, He rose over His Throne.»** Narrated by al-Khallal; classed as sahih by adh-Dhahabi and Ibn al-Qayyim.

What is meant by the Arabic word istiwa (translated above as "rose over") is exaltedness, highness, settling and ascending.

Allah's rising over His Throne (istiwa) is to be understood in a manner that is befitting to His Majesty, and no created being can resemble Him in that, nor can He resemble created beings in that regard.

Speech (kalam)

This is an integral attribute of the divine Essence with regard to type, and is an attribute that is connected to divine actions with regard to incidents when Allah spoke.

Thus Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ speaks when He wills, however He wills, in audible words. The divine attribute of speech is proven in several texts of the Quran and Sunnah.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And Allah spoke to Moses with [direct] speech}* [an-Nisa 4:164] *{And when Moses arrived at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, "My Lord, show me [Yourself] that I may look at You"}* [al-A'raf 7:143].

In the Sunnah, there is the hadith of Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, who said: The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Adam and Musa debated. Musa said: 'O Adam, you are our father but you caused our doom and caused us to be expelled from Paradise.' Adam said to him: 'O Musa, Allah chose you to speak to and wrote (the Torah) for you with His own Hand…'»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

His Countenance (al-wajh)

This is an integral attribute of the divine Essence which is learned from the religious texts(1), as it is affirmed in the Quran and Sunnah. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{and you do not spend except seeking the Countenance of Allah}* [al-Baqarah 2:272] *{And there will remain the Countenance of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor}* [ar-Rahman 55:27].

In the Sunnah, there is the hadith of Jabir ibn Abdillah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا, who said: When this verse was revealed - *{Say, 'He is the [one] Able to send upon you affliction from above you'}* [al-An'am 6:65] – the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, **«I seek refuge in Your Countenance.»** Allah said: *{or from beneath your feet}* [al-An'am 6:65]. The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, **«I seek refuge in Your Countenance.»** Allah said: *{or to divide you into discordant factions}* [al-An'am 6:65]. The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«This is easier to bear.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari.

(1) What is meant by divine attributes which are learned from the religious texts will be explained below.

His two Hands (al-yadayn)

This is an integral attribute of the divine Essence which is learned from the religious texts, as it is affirmed in the Quran and Sunnah.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Rather, both His Hands are extended; He spends however He wills}* [al-Ma'idah 5:64] *{[Allah] said, "O Iblees, what prevented you from prostrating to that which I created with My Hands?"}* [Saad 38:75].

In the Sunnah, there is the hadith of Abu Musa al-Ash'ari رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, from the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, who said: **«Allah holds out His Hand by night to accept the repentance of the one who sinned by day, and He holds out His Hand by day to accept the repentance of the one who sinned by night, [and this will continue] until the sun rises from its place of setting.»** Narrated by Muslim.

His two Eyes (al-aynan)

This is an integral attribute of the divine Essence which is learned from the religious texts, as it is affirmed in the Quran and Sunnah.

In the Quran, Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{that you would be brought up under My [watchful] Eye}* [Ta-Ha 20:39] *{And construct the ship under Our [watchful] Eyes}* [Hud 11:37].

In the Sunnah, there is the hadith of Abdullah ibn Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا in as-Sahihayn, according to which the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«You will not mistake Allah for anyone else; indeed Allah is not one-eyed,»** and he pointed to his eyes. **«The Dajjal is one-eyed; he is blind in his right eye, as if his eye is a floating grape.»**

His Foot (al-qadam)

This is an integral attribute of the divine Essence which is learned from the religious texts, as it is affirmed in sahih hadiths, including the following:

The hadith of Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ in as-Sahihayn, which mentions the dispute between Paradise and Hell, in which it says: **«As for Hell, it will not be filled until Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ puts His Foot on it, then it will say: 'Enough, enough!' Then it will be filled, and all its parts will be integrated together.»**

The names and attributes of Allah that are mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah are numerous; these are just a few examples.

What is required of the Muslim is to affirm the names and attributes of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ in a manner that is befitting to His Majesty and perfection; and as Allah affirmed them for Himself in His Book, for He knows better about Himself than His creation does; and as His Messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ affirmed them in his Sunnah, for he is the most knowledgeable of people about His Lord, and is the most sincere of them, the most eloquent in explaining, the most pious and the one who fears Him most. Let the Muslim beware of denying any of the attributes of Allah, or likening them to the attributes of His creation, and let him adhere to this Quranic principle: *{There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing}* [ash-Shura 42:11].

Categories of the divine attributes

The divine attributes may be divided into several categories according to different criteria.

The first way of categorizing is based on whether they are affirmed or not. There are two types:

- **Attributes that are affirmed:** these are the attributes that Allah has affirmed for Himself, or His Messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ has affirmed them for Him, such as life, knowledge, His Countenance, descending, rising over the Throne, and other attributes. They are all attributes of praise and perfection, and they are most of the attributes that are referred to in the texts of the Quran and Sunnah. This type must be affirmed and understood in a manner that is befitting to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.
- **Attributes that are negated:** these are the attributes that Allah has negated for Himself, or His Messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ has negated them for Him, such as death, sleep and injustice. They are all attributes of imperfection. What is required with regard to this type of attribute is to negate them whilst affirming the opposite attribute in a perfect sense, as noted above. With regard to the verse *{And your Lord does injustice to no one}* [al-Kahf 18:49], what is required is to believe that injustice is negated for Allah, and to affirm that He is perfectly Just.

The second way of categorizing is based on how they are proven. There are two types:

- **Attributes** learned from the religious texts: these are the divine attributes for which there is no way to affirm them except on the basis of texts from the Quran or Sunnah. They may have to do with the divine Essence, such as His Countenance, Hands, Foot and Eyes; or they may have to do with His actions, such as rejoicing, smiling, rising above the Throne, and descending.

  This category includes every attribute that cannot be proven and affirmed except on the basis of a religious text, whether it has to do with the divine Essence or divine actions.

- **Attributes** that are learned from the religious texts and affirmed on the basis of reason. These are the divine attributes that are affirmed by both textual evidence and rational evidence. They may have to do with the divine Essence, such as life, knowledge and power, or they may have to do with divine actions, such as creating and giving.

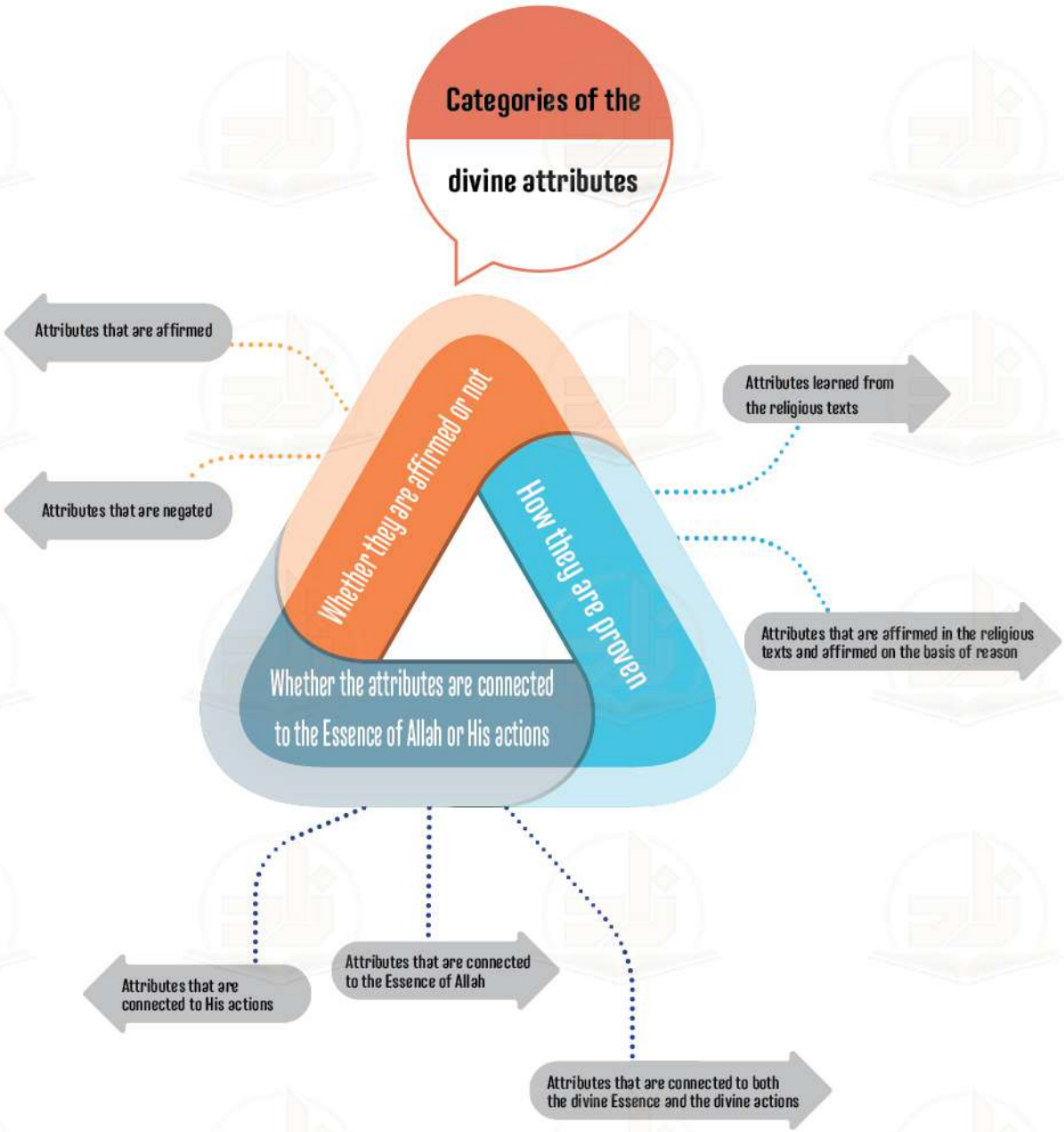
The third way of categorizing is based on whether the attributes are connected to the Essence of Allah or His actions. They are of three types:

- **Attributes** that are integral to the Essence of Allah. These are attributes that have always been and are still part of Allah's Essence, and can never be separate from Him عَزَّوَجَلَّ, such as knowledge, power, life, hearing, seeing, His Countenance, His Hands and so on. Attributes of this type are called integral attributes of the divine Essence, because they are part of His Essence and can never be separate from it.

- **Attributes** that are connected to His actions. These are attributes that have to do with the will of Allah: if He wills He does them, and if He wills He does not do them. They may be done repeatedly, according to His will, such as rising over the Throne, descending to the lowest heaven, anger, joy, and smiling. They are called optional attributes.

- **The guideline with regard** to the attributes that are connected to divine actions is that they are dependent on the divine will. Thus you may say that Allah shows mercy when He wills, He becomes angry when He wills, and He writes when He wills. This is in contrast to the attributes that are integral to the Essence of Allah, because you cannot say that Allah has power when He wills, or that He knows when He wills; rather He عَزَّوَجَلَّ is All-Knowing and All-Powerful in all cases.

Attributes that are connected to both the divine Essence and the divine actions: with regard to the origin of the attributes, they are connected to the divine Essence, and with regard to a particular incident, they are connected to the divine actions. Thus speech is an attribute that is connected to the divine Essence in principle, because Allah has always had and still has the attribute of speech. But with regard to particular incidents of His speaking, and what Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says of words, His speech is an attribute that is connected to His action, because His speech is connected to His will, therefore whenever He wills He speaks, and whenever He wills He does not speak.



How to understand the nature of the divine attributes that are affirmed in the Quran and Sunnah

What is required with regard to the divine attributes is to affirm those which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ affirmed for Himself in His Book or were affirmed on the lips of His Messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and to understand what they mean **without discussing** how they are. The attributes that Allah has ascribed to Himself عَزَّوَجَلَّ or His Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ has ascribed to Him are true and are to be understood according to the apparent meaning of the words, for there is no ambiguity in the words; rather the meanings are extremely clear.

The wording that speaks of the divine attributes and the meanings indicated by that wording, is to be affirmed, and nothing is to be delegated to Allah except the matter of how the divine attributes are, because Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ has kept knowledge of that to Himself, and there is nothing in the religious texts that explains it.

Imam Malik رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ said, when he was asked about Allah's rising over the Throne (istiwa): The rising over the Throne is known, but how it is, is not known; believing in it is obligatory, and asking about how it is, is an innovation (bidah).

This is a brilliant guideline for understanding the texts that speak of the divine attributes: the meaning is known, but how it is, is not known. This is the view of our righteous predecessors (as-salaf as-salih).

With regard to it being obligatory to believe in it, that is because it is what we are told in the Quran and Sunnah.

With regard to asking 'how it is' being an innovation (bidah), that is because the Sahabah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ – who were the keenest of people to acquire knowledge and do good – did not ask about how, even though the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was with them. Therefore asking such questions, for anyone after them, is an innovation.

Thus only the matter of how the divine attributes are is to be delegated to Allah. As for the wording and meanings of the divine attributes, they are known and are not to be delegated to Him.

Whoever says that the early generations did not know the meaning of the verses that speak of the divine attributes, and that they delegated knowledge of the meaning of the divine attributes to Allah, as they did with regard to the issue of how those attributes are, is lying about them. Rather the view of the early generations was that they affirmed the wording and the meanings, and they only delegated the matter of how to Allah.

The evidence for that is the fact that Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ commanded us to contemplate the entire Quran, without exception, and urged us to reflect upon its meanings and seek to understand it. If its meanings were incomprehensible, He would not have enjoined us to contemplate its meanings. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?}* [Muhammad 47:24] *{Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from [any] other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction}* [an-

Nisa 4:82] *{[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded}* [Saad 38:29].

And He عَزَّوَجَلَّ did not say: except the verses that speak of the divine attributes; do not reflect on them because their meanings are not known!

Rather their meanings are known. We know that hearing is different from seeing, and that knowledge is the opposite of ignorance, and that istiwa (rising) in linguistic terms refers to settling, being exalted and ascending, but how the Lord rose over the Throne is unknown to us, and no one knows it except Him. The same may be said with regard to how His knowledge is, how His hearing is and how His seeing is.

A very common mistake is the notion that al-Mufawwidah (those who delegate to Allah knowledge of the meanings of the divine attributes) are Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah. That is not the case; the view of al-Mufawwidah is one of the most reprehensible views of people on earth, because they delegate to Allah knowledge of both the meanings and how the divine attributes are. Thus they say: The meanings of the religious texts which speak of the divine attributes are not known; rather even the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ did not understand their meanings! The correct view is to delegate to Allah knowledge of how the divine attributes are, because there is no text that explains that. But this does not apply to the meanings, because the meanings are known to anyone who has any knowledge of Arabic.

Activities

1. **Give examples from the Quran and Sunnah of some of the names and attributes of Allah. Can we derive a name of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ from every attribute?**
2. **The divine names and attributes may be categorized according to different criteria. Mention them and give examples.**
3. **Write a brief essay based on material other than what you have studied here, about the divine attributes that are learned from religious texts; could they be affirmed through rational thinking?**
4. **Summarize what you have studied about the guideline on how to understand what has been proven of divine names and attributes.**
5. **Why is asking about how the divine attributes are regarded as an innovation (bidah)?**
6. **In the light of what you have studied, explain the attitude of al-Mufawwidah (those who delegate to Allah knowledge of the meanings of the divine attributes) and why they are wrong. Use other references.**

Attributes that are neither affirmed nor negated in the Quran and Sunnah

There are some attributes which are not mentioned in the texts of the Quran and Sunnah, such as the attributes of having a direction, occupying space, having a physical being, and so on. What is our attitude concerning them?

The answer is: no one has the right to affirm these attributes because there is no evidence to support them.

With regard to their meaning, no one has the right to accept or reject them until he knows what is meant by them. Then if it is true, he must accept it, and if it is false, he must reject it.

Examples of that include the following:

Having a direction

If someone were to say: 'Allah is in a certain direction', or ask: 'Is Allah in a certain direction?', it may be said to him: The word direction does not appear in the Quran and Sunnah; there is no affirmation or negation of it, and there is nothing in them to indicate that Allah is in a certain direction or that He is not in a certain direction. Moreover, in the religious texts there are references to other divine attributes, so we have no need of this, such as Allah's being exalted, up above and having risen over the Throne. Some of the later scholars produced clumsy arguments, whether they were seeking to affirm or negate this attribute.

According to the principle mentioned above, we may say: with regard to the wording, we neither affirm it nor negate it, because it is not mentioned in the religious texts.

As for the meaning, we look at what is meant by direction.

If what is meant by direction is some created thing that encompasses Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, this is a false meaning that is not appropriate to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, for no created thing can encompass Him. His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not, and He cannot be said to be inside of anything that He has created.

If what is meant by direction is what is above the universe, this is true, for it is proven that Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ is high above His creation, as is indicated by the Quran and Sunnah, scholarly consensus, reason and sound human nature. In Sahih Muslim it is narrated from Muawiyah ibn al-Hakam as-Sulami رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to a slave woman: **«Where is Allah?»** She said: Above the heaven. He said: **«Who am I?»** She said: You are the Messenger of Allah. He said: **«Set her free, for she is a believer.»**

Occupying space or being in a space

If someone were to say: can we describe Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ as occupying space or being in a space?

We say: The words occupying space or being in a space do not occur in the Quran or Sunnah, and are neither negated nor affirmed, because there is nothing in the Quran or Sunnah to suggest that Allah is in a space or that He occupies space, or that this is not the case. Moreover, in the religious texts of the Quran and Sunnah we have that which is sufficient, so there is no need to use these words, such as the divine names al-Aliy (the Exalted), az-Zaahir (the Most High) and al-Kabeer (the Most Great).

Some of the later scholars produced clumsy arguments, whether they were seeking to affirm or negate this attribute.

Based on the principle mentioned above, we may say:

With regard to the wording, we neither affirm it nor negate it, because it is not narrated in any religious text.

With regard to the meaning, then we must examine what is meant by being in a space or occupying space.

If what is meant is that there is some created thing that surrounds or encompasses Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ in that space, then this is a false meaning that cannot be applied in the case of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and is not befitting to Him, for Allah is too great and too majestic for any created thing to surround Him or encompass Him. How could that be the case, when His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth and He will take hold of the entire earth on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens will be rolled up in His right Hand?

In as-Sahihayn and elsewhere it is narrated from Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى will seize the earth on the Day of Resurrection, and He will roll up the heavens in His right Hand, then He will say: 'I am the Sovereign; where are the kings of the earth?'»**

Ibn Abbas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا said: "In the Hand of the Most Gracious, the seven heavens and the seven earths are like no more than a mustard seed in the hand of one of you."

If what is meant by being in a space or occupying space is that Allah is separate from created things – that is, distinct from them, separate from them and not in them, and they are not in Him – then this is true and is affirmed in the case of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, as the leading scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah said: He is above His heavens, above His Throne, separate and distinct from His creation.

The same principle should be applied to every attribute that is not mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah, such as the physical body, and so on.

5

Outcomes of believing in the names and attributes of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ

In this unit we will study

Outcomes of believing in the names and attributes of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ

Practical examples of the impact of believing in the oneness of the divine names and attributes (Tawhid al-asma wa's-sifat)

Outcomes of believing in the names and attributes of Allah

Knowing the names and attributes of Allah, reflecting on them, and understanding them in accordance with the meaning that Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ intended is one of the most important and noblest branches of knowledge, because of what results from it of immense benefits and great outcomes.

Some of the outcomes that result from believing in them include the following:

1. **Love of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and veneration of Him, which lead a person to follow His commands and heed His prohibitions.**
   Following the commands of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and heeding His prohibitions leads to perfect happiness in this world and the Hereafter, for both individuals and communities, as Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do}* [an-Nahl 16:97].

2. **Increase in faith:** knowing the names and attributes of Allah is one of the greatest means of increasing faith, because of what it instills in people's hearts of love of Allah, turning to Him, and venerating and glorifying the Creator عَزَّوَجَلَّ: *{And those who are guided - He increases them in guidance and gives them their righteousness}* [Muhammad 47:17].

3. **Fear of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and obeying Him. The more a person knows his Lord,** the closer he will be to Him and the more he will fear Him and be willing to worship Him, and he will be less likely to disobey Him and go against His commands.

4. **Developing certain faith that Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ Alone is the One Who is running the affairs of His creation.** This is something that will help the individual to attain a high level of trust (tawakkul) in Allah to bring religious or worldly benefits, and that will lead to success and triumph, for whoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him.

Knowing the names and attributes of Allah is the way to know Allah, for Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ created creation to know Him and worship Him. This is the ultimate goal that is required of them, so focusing on that is focusing on the purpose for which one was created, and neglecting it is neglecting the purpose for which one was created. For one to whom Allah's blessings keep coming to remain ignorant of his Lord and show no interest in knowing Him is very bad indeed.

5

Purification of the soul and adherence to the path of servitude and devotion to the One and Only (Allah). This is one of the most important outcomes that result from learning and understanding the names and attributes of Allah, because the revelation that came down from Allah aims to rectify man's condition, and the way to rectify the human condition is for people to adhere to the path of servitude to Allah Alone, with no partner or associate. Knowledge of the names and attributes of Allah will protect the individual – by Allah's leave – from slipping, and will open to him the gates of hope and make his faith firm.

6

For example:

The divine names that reflect power and might fill our hearts with awe and veneration for Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

The divine names that reflect beauty, kindness, generosity, mercy and bounty fill the heart with love for Him, longing for Him, hope for that which is with Him, and praise and thanksgiving to Allah.

The divine names that reflect pride, wisdom, knowledge and power fill the heart with humility and submission to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

The divine names that reflect knowledge and awareness, and indicate that Allah is All-Encompassing and always watching, fill the heart with fear of Allah and awareness that He is always watching.

The divine names that reflect divine self-sufficiency and the need of all creatures for Him, and His kindness, fill the heart with a sense of one's desperate need for His help and to turn to Him in all times and in all situations.

7 **Being deterred from committing sin, because souls may have some inclination or be tempted to commit sin,** but then they remember that Allah sees them, so they think of themselves as being watched by Allah now and remember the standing before Him on the Day of Resurrection, and thus they are deterred and refrain, and keep away from sin.

8 **The one who attains understanding of the divine names and attributes will be able to understand the true meaning of Tawhid,** which cannot be attained except by the elite of those who affirm His oneness.

Practical examples of the impact of believing in the oneness of the divine names and attributes (Tawhid al-asma wa's-sifat)

Proper understanding of the oneness of the divine names and attributes (Tawhid al-asma wa's-sifat) will have an immense impact on faith in practical terms. In this regard, we cannot list all of these impacts, because they are so many. Hence we will mention only the most important of them:

Knowledge and power. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{It is Allah who has created seven heavens and of the earth, the like of them. [His] command descends among them so you may know that Allah has power over all things and that Allah has encompassed all things in knowledge}* [at-Talaq 65:12].

1 This verse affirms the comprehensive nature of the **knowledge of Allah,** and that He knows all things in detail; and it affirms the **comprehensive nature of His power.**

2 How it impacts a person's faith is that it increases his awareness that Allah is watching him and increases his fear of Him.

Provision and might. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Indeed, it is Allah who is the [continual] Provider, Lord of Might, the Powerful.}* [adh-Dhariyat 51:58].

1. This verse affirms the divine names ar-Razzaq (the Provider) and al-Mateen (the Powerful), and the divine attribute of might.

2. How it impacts a person's faith:

   a. It connects his heart to Allah, so that his hope is placed in Him with regard to provision, and he does not pay attention to any created being.

   b. It leads to the belief that no matter how great someone's power is, it will never be able to match the power of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

   c. It reminds us that we should not seek strength or provision from anyone except Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

Hearing and seeing. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing}* [an-Nisa 4:58] *{Whoever desires the reward of this world - then with Allah is the reward of this world and the Hereafter. And ever is Allah Hearing and Seeing}* [an-Nisa 4:134].

1. These two verses affirm the divine names as-Samee (the All-Hearing) and al-Baseer (the All-Seeing).

2. How they impact our faith: We will be careful to not go against the commands of Allah in our words and deeds.

Love. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of good}* [al-Baqarah 2:195] *{and act justly. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly}* [al-Hujurat 49:9] *{Indeed, Allah loves the righteous [who fear Him]}* [at-Tawbah 9:7] *{Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves}* [al-Baqarah 2:222].

1. These verses affirm the divine attribute of love.

2. How they impact our faith:
   - a. We will be keen to do good, because Allah loves that, and everything that Allah loves, we will be keen to do.
   - b. We will be just and we will strive to promote justice.
   - c. We will fear Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, because He loves those who fear Him.
   - d. We will repent to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ often, and we will purify ourselves for Him, because He جَلَّوَعَلَا loves those who constantly repent and those who purify themselves.

Mercy. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{and He is the Forgiving, the Merciful}* [al-Ahqaf 46:8] *{But Allah is the best guardian, and He is the most merciful of the merciful}* [Yusuf 12:64].

1. These two verses affirm the divine name ar-Raheem (the Most Merciful).

2. How they impact our faith:
   - a. They make us put our hope in Allah's mercy.

b This belief motivates us to do everything that could be a means of attaining Allah's mercy, such as doing good, because Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good}* [al-A'raf 7:56]; fearing Allah, giving zakat, and believing in the verses of Allah, because He عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{My mercy encompasses all things. So I will decree it [especially] for those who fear Me and give zakah and those who believe in Our verses}* [al-A'raf 7:156]; and **believing,** for it is one of the means of attaining the mercy of Allah, as He says: *{And ever is He, to the believers, Merciful}* [al-Ahzab 33:43].

Coming. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And your Lord has come and the angels, rank upon rank}* [al-Fajr 89:22] *{Do they [then] wait for anything except that the angels should come to them or your Lord should come}* [al-An'am 6:158].

1 These two verses affirm the divine attribute of coming.

2 How these verses impact our faith and conduct:

a They instill fear of that momentous scene when the Lord عَزَّوَجَلَّ will come to judge between His slaves, and there will be nothing before you except the Lord عَزَّوَجَلَّ. Then if you did good, you will be rewarded for it, and if you did otherwise, then you will be requited for it, as the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«There is no one among you but his Lord will speak to him, with no interpreter in between them. He will look to his right and will not see anything except what he sent on ahead of his deeds, and he will look to his left and will not see anything except what he sent on ahead of his deeds, and he will look in front of him and will see the Fire facing him. So protect yourselves from the Fire, even with half a date.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Power and honour. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Those who take disbelievers as allies instead of the believers. Do they seek with them power and honour? But indeed, power belongs to Allah entirely}* [an-Nisa 4:139], *{And let not their speech grieve you. Indeed, power and honour belong to Allah entirely. He is the Hearing, the Knowing}* [Yunus 10:65], and *{They say, "If we return to al-Madinah, the more powerful will surely expel therefrom the more humble." And to Allah belong [all] power and honour, and to His Messenger, and to the believers, but the hypocrites do not know}* [al-Munafiqun 63:8].

1. These verses affirm the divine attribute of **power and honour**.

2. How these verses impact our conduct:

   a. It becomes impossible for us to do any action whereby we are fighting Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, such as riba (usury) for example, as Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And if you do not [give up riba], then be informed of a war [against you] from Allah and His Messenger}* [al-Baqarah 2:279]; or banditry, *{Indeed, the penalty for those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive upon earth [to cause] corruption is none but that they be killed or crucified or that their hands and feet be cut off from opposite sides or that they be exiled from the land. That is for them a disgrace in this world; and for them in the Hereafter is a great punishment}* [al-Ma'idah 5:33].

   b. The believer should be proud of his religion and feel honoured to be a Muslim.

Exaltedness. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Do you feel secure that He who is above the heaven would not cause the earth to swallow you and suddenly it would sway, Or do you feel secure that He who is above the heaven would not send against you a storm of stones? Then you would know how [severe] was My warning}* [al-Mulk 67:16-17].

1. These two verses affirm the divine attribute of **exaltedness**.

2. How these two verses impact faith:

   a. If a person knows that Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ is above all things, then he will realize the extent of His authority and domination over His creation, and hence he will fear Him and venerate Him.

   b. When a person fears and venerates his Lord, he will strive to protect himself from His punishment, do what is obligatory and refrain from what is forbidden.

Al-Azeem (the Most Great). Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{So exalt the name of your Lord, the Most Great}* [al-Waqi'ah 56:74], *{Indeed, he did not used to believe in Allah, the Most Great}* [al-Haqqah 69:33].

1. These two verses affirm the divine name **al-Azeem** (the Most Great).

2. How these two verses impact faith:

   a. They teach us to venerate the Lord in our hearts.

   b. They teach us to venerate His commands and the symbols and rituals of His religion.

Ash-Shakir (the Appreciative). Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Indeed, al-Safa and al-Marwah are among the symbols of Allah. So whoever makes Hajj to the House or performs 'umrah – there is no blame upon him for walking between them. And whoever volunteers good – then indeed, Allah is Appreciative and Knowing}* [al-Baqarah 2:158], *{What would Allah do with your punishment if you are grateful and believe? And ever is Allah Appreciative and Knowing}* [an-Nisa 4:147].

1. These two verses affirm the divine name **ash-Shakir** (the Appreciative).

2. How these two verses impact faith:

   a. They teach us to show gratitude to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ in our hearts, in our words and in our actions.

   b. They teach us to show gratitude to those who show kindness to us and do us favours.

Pleasure or approval. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{If you disbelieve – indeed, Allah is Free from need of you. And He does not approve for His servants disbelief. And if you are grateful, He approves it for you;}* [az-Zumar 39:7], *{Allah will say, "This is the Day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness." For them are gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, Allah being pleased with them, and they with Him. That is the great attainment}* [al-Ma'idah 5:119].

1 These verses affirm the divine attribute of **pleasure or approval**.

2 How these verses impact faith:

a They teach us to praise Allah as He deserves.

b They teach us to hasten to do every deed that is pleasing to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, such as fearing Allah in private and in public, honouring parents, being truthful, showing gratitude, praising Allah after eating and drinking, and using the siwak.

Al-Afuw (the Pardoning). Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{O you who have believed, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying or in a state of janaabah, except those passing through [a place of prayer], until you have washed [your whole body]. And if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and find no water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and your hands [with it]. Indeed, Allah is ever Pardoning and Forgiving}* [an-Nisa 4:43], *{That [is so]. And whoever responds [to injustice] with the equivalent of that with which he was harmed and then is tyrannized – Allah will surely aid him. Indeed, Allah is Pardoning and Forgiving}* [al-Hajj 22:60], *{Those who pronounce zihaar among you [to separate] from their wives – they are not [consequently] their mothers. Their mothers are none but those who gave birth to them. And indeed, they are saying an objectionable statement and a falsehood. But indeed, Allah is Pardoning and Forgiving}* [al-Mujadilah 58:2].

1 These verses affirm the divine name **Al-Afuw** (the Pardoning).

2 How these verses impact faith:

a They teach us to draw closer to Allah in accordance with what this attribute means, and to hope for Allah's pardon.

b They teach us to call upon our Lord عَزَّوَجَلَّ, asking Him to pardon us.

Joy or rejoicing. It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Indeed Allah rejoices at the repentance of one of you more than one of you rejoices when he finds his lost camel.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

1 This hadith affirms the divine attribute of **joy**.

2 How this hadith impacts faith: it makes one keen to do that which pleases Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, which includes repenting sincerely to Him جَلَّ وَعَلَا.

Smiling. It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Allah smiles at two men, one of whom kills the other, and they both enter Paradise. The first man fights in Allah's cause and is killed, then Allah turns in mercy to the killer [and he becomes Muslim] and [Allah] causes him to die as a martyr.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

1 This hadith affirms the divine attribute of **smiling**.

2 How this hadith impacts faith is that when a person knows that his Lord جَلَّ وَعَلَا smiles, he will hope for a great reward from Him.

Al-Jameel (the Beautiful). It was narrated that Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Indeed Allah is Beautiful and loves beauty; arrogance is rejecting the truth and looking down on people.»** Narrated by Muslim.

1. This hadith affirms the divine name **al-Jameel** (the Beautiful).

2. How this hadith impacts faith:

   a. It teaches us to love Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

   b. It teaches us to beautify our words and deeds, and manners and attitude.

Activities

1. **What is the principle with regard to understanding divine attributes that are neither negated nor affirmed in the Quran and Sunnah? Give an example?**

2. **List some of the impacts of believing in the divine names and attributes. Which of them is the most important in your view?**

3. **What is the impact on faith of believing in the following divine names: al-Aleem (the All-Knowing), al-Hakeem (the Most Wise), as-Samee (the All-Hearing), al-Qadeer (the All-Powerful), al-Wahhab (the Bestower)?**

And Allah is the source of strength.

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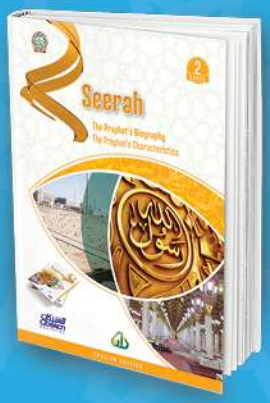

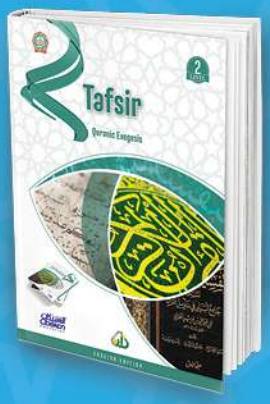

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